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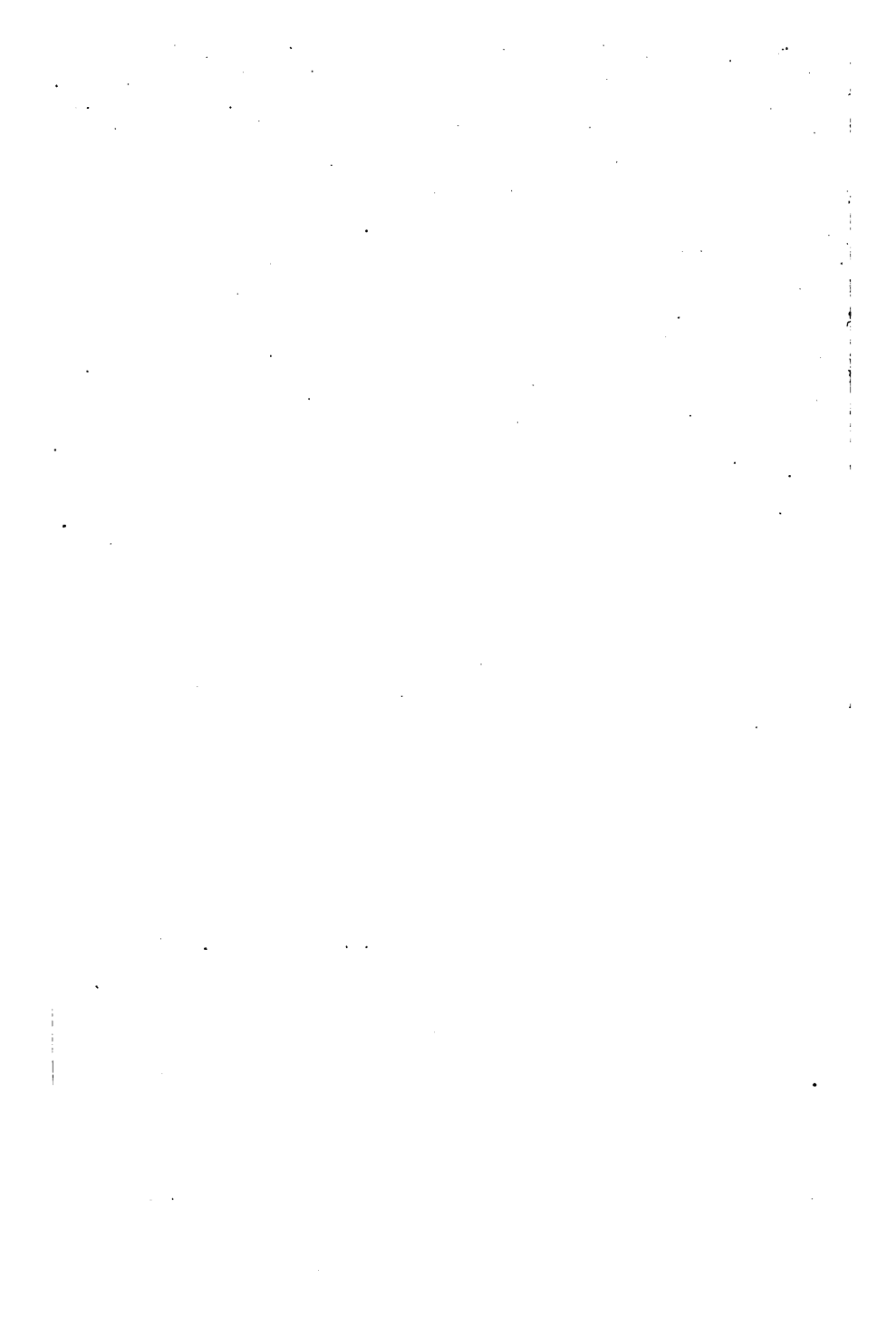
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DORNER

ON THE

FUTURE STATE

BEING A

TRANSLATION OF THE SECTION OF HIS SYSTEM
OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

COMPRISING

THE DOCTRINE OF THE LAST THINGS

With an Introduction and Notes

BY

NEWMAN SMYTH

AUTHOR OF "ORTHODOX THEOLOGY OF TO-DAY," "OLD
FAITHS IN NEW LIGHT," ETC.

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1883

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TROW'S
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
201-213 East 12th Street
NEW YORK

Gift
Tappan Pub. Co.
6-9-1932

THE FUTURE STATE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE course of recent theological discussion has called general attention to Dorner's eschatology. To many these words designate some vague and portentous form of German speculation, which should be kept with all possible pains from corrupting the sources of New England theology. Men like the fervent Tholuck, the profound Müller, and the learned Dorner, may be good enough Christians for Germany, but not for New England! Dorner's last great work, the ripe fruit of a ripe mind, may be profitable for the "state church" of Prussia, but it should hardly be tolerated in the free churches of America! Such suspicions and fears of good men among us, how-

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ever, may be in part accounted for and pardoned in view of the fact that their knowledge of the master-work of this master-mind among theologians has been mainly derived from such fragmentary and imperfect statements, and even misrepresentations, of Dr. Dorner's theology as have found their way into the religious papers, and upon the platform, in this country.

It seems to me to be a timely work, therefore, as it is a grateful task, to bring one portion, at least, of Dorner's "System of the Doctrine of Christian Faith"—that portion now particularly under discussion—before many American readers, who otherwise would still be dependent only upon the crude and second-hand reports of his eschatology which I find in general circulation among us. His whole system of theology has been translated in Clark's Foreign Theological Library; but the four volumes of this translation may be beyond the inclination or the reach of many who might be glad to study for themselves his views upon the special subjects around which of late the tides of theological discussion have been rising. If the possession of this portion

of Dorner's theology shall lead any to make themselves acquainted, even at some cost, with his whole system of faith, I shall have accomplished a double purpose, and I believe a double good, by this endeavor to put into their hands this concluding chapter of his great work.

I should be doing Dr. Dorner, however, an injustice should I publish as a tract for the times his chapter upon eschatology, without seeking through an introduction to put it in its own proper perspective, and to indicate the general principles of Dorner's reasoning through which we should approach this portion of his system. This seems all the more necessary since American readers are perhaps too much inclined to go up to the master-works of German scholarship as some tourists enter a foreign gallery, note-book in hand, armed with certain stock questions, and then hurry away, imagining that they understand a great statue or painting. Dorner's reasonings are living outgrowths from his principles of faith, and his conclusions need to be apprehended and discussed not merely as so many logical quan-

tities of thought, but they should be understood and estimated in the light of the principles in which they have grown to be what they are. No one can read with sympathetic thoroughness many pages of Dorner without becoming aware of the force and subtlety of his reasoning; but he will also perceive that he is not led by mere logic, or gradually pressed into some predetermined conclusion by an adept in theological dialectics. Dorner knows nothing of the method by which conclusions are first deftly interwoven into definitions, and then logically deduced from those definitions. His pages are free from the intrigues of verbal logic, as well as from the assumptions of axiomatic science; his supreme object throughout seems to be to perceive the truth in all systems, and to present, in the consistency of the highest ethical principles, what he finds to be the real contents of Christian faith. His writings illustrate a remark of Newman in his essay on Development, that logic is necessary for the statement and communication of truth, but that other qualities also are necessary for the discovery of truth. It is this calm,

truth-loving, and truth-seeing spirit of Dorner that renders his thinking not only at times wonderfully suggestive and stimulating, but also an invaluable help and guide for students who would think their way through the heart of the most difficult problems of theology. A humble, truth-loving spirit, combined with affluent and comprehensive theological learning, and a simple, reverent faith—the genuine child of Luther's reformation—together with rare gifts of philosophic insight and power to discern the inner relations and real development of theological beliefs, have rendered Dorner, these many years, pre-eminent among the evangelical teachers of Germany.

A recent critic of Dorner, in a theological review published in this country, asserts that Dorner's system has no centre. It is conceivable that his system might possibly make that impression upon one approaching it from the outside, with no sympathy for, and consequent power to understand, its inner spirit; for it is indeed true that Dorner recognizes in Protestantism two cardinal principles, and would prove faithful to both in all his dog-

matic construction, viz., the formal and the material principles, Scripture and faith. His theology revolves, a well-rounded sphere, upon these two poles—Scripture and faith. But it has one centre—Christ. It has one supreme law—Christianity. God in Christ, absolute Christianity, the self-revelation of God in Christ,—these words mark what Dorner ever recognizes as the real contents both of Scripture and faith, and consequently as the centre and summation of all theology. I know of no passage in modern theological literature so thoroughly satisfactory and so helpful as is the exposition which Dorner has given in his “History of Protestant Theology,” of the relative independence and the real unity of these two cardinal principles of the Reformation—the Scripture and faith. The same thorough conception of the sources of Christian theology pervades his “System of Christian Doctrine.” Both faith and the Scripture, he insists, “have the same origin in the Holy Spirit, which proceeds from Christ,—how can they disturb or be hostile to one another?”¹ Faith and the

¹ *His.*, p. 248.

Scripture are respectively the Christian subjective and objective principle of knowledge, while the real principle of Christianity is God in Christ and the Holy Ghost.¹ Dorner's conception of faith, like Luther's, is one of intense Christian realism. Its object is not the word of God, but the Christian revelation, or God in Christ. It is not exact, and may be misleading, to say that Dorner makes the historical Christ, still less Christ as attested by miracles, the object of faith, and to contrast this with some vague conception of faith as the reception of a so-called "essential Christ." No one has more clearly recognized than Dorner the preparatory imperfection of a merely historic faith, or more clearly indicated the way from the Jesus of the Gospels to faith in the self-revelation of God—faith in absolute Christianity. What Dorner does say in his very first proposition in his doctrine of faith, is this: "Faith through which Christian experience is gained, and which must precede scientific knowledge and demonstration, has indeed in all its forms an unmistakable resemblance, for it will be in

¹ Glaubenslehre, I., s. 155 f. and note.

some way an appropriation of what Christianity objectively is.”¹ Faith, that is, he regards as union with objective Christianity. Faith is the appropriation of the real contents of Christianity. There may be both “an historical and an ideal-divine side to Christianity,” and different subjective positions may be assumed to these different aspects of it; but he will lay the chief weight “neither upon the historical nor the ideal side,” but “both factors,” he holds, “may be conceived and appropriated as standing in inner unity, and interpenetration.”²

In accordance with this fundamental conception of faith as a real appropriation of Christianity, he proceeds to its scientific investigation and development,—his own language may best show how: “The Christian doctrine of faith has to proceed, indeed, not absolutely productively, but rather reproductively; yet not on that account merely empirically and by reflection, but also constructively and progressively. The Christian illuminated spirit, through faith and its experience united with the objective Christianity, upon which faith

¹ Glaubenslehre, I., s. 16.

² Ibid., I., s. 64.

knows that it is founded, and which is confirmed by the sacred Scripture and the biblical faith of the Church, has to bring its religious knowledge to systematic settlement and unfolding."¹ His method or principle of procedure is further indicated in the following passage: "For exegetical theology the immediate subject is the sacred Scripture; for historical theology, the history of the Church; but for the dogmatic and propositional (*thetische*), the subject is faith with its contents appropriated from the sacred Scripture, by which it has continually to show itself to be Christian. The supreme fact in this contents of faith is the Christian idea of God. From it, as the highest unity and truth, are all statements of faith, and all Christian truths, immediately or mediately to be derived."² Throughout Dorner's development of the Christian idea of God appears one of the most distinctive and pervasive elements of his thinking—its predominant ethical spirit. His system might almost be said to have its being in pure Christian ethics. One might illustrate this charac-

¹ *Glaubenslehre*, I., s. 155.² *Ibid.*, s. 157.

teristic by quotations taken almost at random from his discussion of the moral nature of God, the Trinity, or the divine attributes. Righteousness is essentially grounded in God's being as love. "All in God is for love." "Knowledge even is perfect in God first through love." God, that is, possesses his own omniscience for the sake of his absolute love, and his knowledge is perfect as the pure wisdom of love. "God has absolutely his unchangeableness through and in his ethical nature, from which he cannot and will not fall." Dorner's discussion of the divine unchangeableness, in the light of supreme Christian ethics, is one of the most original and fruitful contributions to modern theology. Conceiving of it thus, as ethical unchangeableness, he harmonizes it with the living relations into which God enters in history, and can even admit that consequently the atonement does not merely effect a change of the relations of the world toward God, but also that "the world, since Christ really belonged to it, has a different worth for God, which before Christ it did not have—the actuality of the reconciliation of the world

through Christ has for God a worth, which before Christ for God himself did not really exist.”¹ This vital ethical element in Dorner’s thought is the strength and health in which Christian theology now needs above all to be revived. In reading Dorner we realize that Christian thought, as well as life, has primarily to do, not with abstractions of attributes, or extra-divine necessities of government, but with the living God—with principles of order and with laws of administration only as these are the manifestations and outgoings of Him who is the supreme moral good—whose government is his ethical, personal conduct of his universe.

Since in Christianity there is realized a supreme ethical idea of God, which faith may apprehend, for which indeed faith is the spiritual eye, it follows—so Dorner would assume—that we must determine what is Scripture, and interpret God’s Word, and also construct Christian theology, in harmony with, and under the supreme influence of, this real, absolute Christianity, or God manifest in Christ. Chris-

¹ Glaubenslehre, I., s. 445.

tianity can be read scientifically only in its own pure light. Any one who has once grasped this controlling principle of Dorner's theology, any one whose own theological thought has been uplifted into this pure ethical element in which Dorner's reasonings live and have their being, will need no explanation of Dorner's dogmatic hesitancy when he finds himself unable to reconcile facts of history, or texts of Scripture, with that which faith has already learned to deem Christlike and most worthy of God. Dorner would teach as a Christian dogma that only which can be made an integral part of faith; for it is the object of theology to develop and show in their harmony the real contents of faith. It is not enough for a Christian doctrine that it be apparently contained in the Scripture; it needs also to be recognized as Christian by faith, as sooner or later all the contents of revelation will become also part of the life of faith, for both are of God. Faith wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost is "the eye for that which is Christian in the Scripture." Both are works of the Spirit, having the same essential contents; and the

object of Christian theology is to bring out into the Christian recognition of Christian experience that which is given for faith in the Scripture. Only in part may this idea of Christian theology be realized under our present limitations of ignorance and sin ; yet only as theology succeeds approximately, at least, in this, is it worthy the name of Christian theology—is it a Christian solution of the problems of life and destiny. Where theology must fall evidently short of this, dogmatism is certainly not yet a work of faith, and it may be a hazardous interpretation of Scripture.

Dorner's discussion of eschatology is in general consistency with the principles already described ; it is closely connected with the view of the absolute nature of Christianity, and the universal importance of Christ, which in his discussion of the doctrine of sin and the atonement he has maintained with great force. In his endeavor to reconcile the fact of original sin with the claims of pure justice we meet with the thought that every man's final worth and fate will be determined not on the plane of the law upon which the individual

with the inheritance of human sinfulness is compelled to start, but upon the higher plane of grace to which Christ's work has lifted up the race, and upon which any human being, notwithstanding his inheritance of man's sinfulness, may come to a free personal decision for good or evil ; and consequently no man will be finally judged until he shall have definitely rejected the manifestation of God's love in the offer of Christ, or, in other words, shall have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, whom Christ has sent—the sin against the Spirit of the Christian revelation. This is only saying, in other words, that the last judgment shall be for all a Christian judgment.

In this profound and comprehensive discussion of the doctrine of sin Dorner does not question or overlook its ill desert, as he recognizes also an ethical necessity in God for the punishment of sin apart from grace. The view which Dorner maintains of the nature of the divine righteousness, particularly in its juridical aspects,¹ as well as his frequent discriminating assertions of the guilt and punishment due sin

¹ Glaubenslehre, I., s. 24.

under the law, should have been sufficient to prevent any critic, who has read these portions of his work, from charging him with confusing law and grace. On the contrary, he has carefully distinguished between these different stages of man's history, and the different degrees of sin corresponding to each of them. If the question be asked, whether character may not become permanent under the operation of natural laws of habit, and upon the plane of the law, a student of Dorner would answer: Free, moral personality (for which God created man) can be fully developed out of the generic state, or race-connection, and can be finally self-determined in good or evil only through the actual choice or rejection of the supreme ethical good. Until free self-determination is reached in view of the final good; until in the approach of that supreme good the definitive crisis comes to the individual, human character may indeed be sinful and worthy of punishment, but it cannot have reached its final form and permanence. Its guilt, before that last sin of unbelief, is not irredeemable, nor is its punishment final doom.

Everything up to that absolute personal determination, is still provisional and preparatory; the generic and the individual sin and guilt are not yet thoroughly separated, and the individual person, is, therefore, not yet fully ripe for judgment. So, also, the atonement of Christ may avail vicariously for the individual in whom the sin of the world, which is his by nature, has not yet become his personal sin against the Holy Ghost through his rejection of the good in its absolute revelation.¹ On the other hand, any one who borrows from Julius Müller his principle of the development of the depraved will under natural law, and the tendency of sin toward final permanence of habit, should, also, in all ethical thoroughness, adopt Müller's general premise, and hold to a prior, free, self-determination in some pre-existent state. Either that, or Dorner's view of final, free, personal decision, under the revelation of the supreme good, is the only logical, thoroughly ethical, alternative. They may follow "scientific methods" in theology, but they build on a slippery slope, half-way be-

¹ Glaubenslehre, II., s. 627 ff.

tween freedom and fate, who fail to ground their systems of "clear ideas" upon one or the other of these postulates of the two greatest of modern theologians. It is hazardous to borrow spasmodically, here a little and there a little, from German thinkers. Their theologies are apt to be ethical, as well as logical, wholes.

This entire discussion of the nature, development, and definitive judgment, of a moral personality, should proceed under what Dörner would call the regulative Christian idea of God. It is true that man's sin is worthy of punishment; and nature may offer room enough for man to ruin himself forever, but it may not be large enough for God to work out upon its plane, and for all men, his whole work of love. The ultimate question is not, what may a man under the law justly claim as a legal right, but what God, as he has revealed himself in Christ, may be satisfied in doing for all men. Dörner would hold that God can be self-satisfied in no instance with anything less than a judgment upon the plane of grace—a Christian judgment. What we should seek to learn and

to think is always, what is most worthy of God—which is identical with the question what is most Christian. We cannot know God, as we may, in his relations to any of his creatures, if we are content to study his thoughts and ways simply upon some preparatory or provisional stage of his conduct of human history; but we must read all God's thoughts, and toward all men, in the light of the last perfect revelation of God, that is, in view of absolute Christianity. This is coincident, therefore, with the question what does absolute Christian ethics—the ethics of the regenerated Christian consciousness—the ethics of faith, measuring itself by the objective Scriptures,—lead us to think or to believe upon these dark problems of sin and destiny? After recognizing the fact of sinfulness as our inheritance, Dörner remarks: "But here new problems open, and it is for us so to state the doctrine of the general inborn evil tendency, or the general need of redemption, that neither personal moral freedom, and the truth of the conception of guilt, nor the ethical idea of God shall suffer harm."

In working out this problem he reaches one conclusion which will not seem foreign to New England thought: "The definitive worth and the final destiny of the individual are bound to his personal decision."¹ But what is necessary to this decision, that is, necessary not merely for man to come to a self-determination, but for God as declared in Christ to be willing to leave him alone in his determination? What on pure ethical grounds is necessary for the final worth and judgment of man? In view of the Gospel Dorner does not hesitate to answer as follows: "From the objective side this,—that the good should be placed before the eyes in its full clearness and truth, not simply as the voice of conscience or as an ordinance, but in its brightest and most attractive form, as the personal love, in order that the decision for or against it may receive decisive importance. Subjectively, besides the knowledge of this good, there must be full freedom of decision from out one's own proper personality."² Further, he affirms that "this subjective and objective possibility of free

¹ Glaubenslehre, II., s., 159.

² *Ibid.*, 174.

decision is now given from God through Christianity as the absolute religion." If any sin before Christ, he maintains, could be decisive unbelief, then the word would no more be true that Christ has power to overcome all sin before him; "the sin previous to Christ would in some be beforehand stronger than grace." "So, then, from the true standpoint, that is, from Christianity, is it to be said: So long as the Gospel, which must come to all before the judgment,¹ has not come inwardly near man, consequently has not yet been rejected, he may deserve punishment, and remain without Christ in increasing unhappiness; but neither has there been given to him the definitive condemnation, nor its opposite, but he is still as it were in a provisional condition.—In comparison with the sin which has known Christ and rejected him, is all previous sin preparatory; however condemnable in itself and punishable, yet it is only a stage (moment) in the process which has for its goal to make ripe for the judgment. . . . From this position of Christ, as he who brings the crisis (decisive test), and only

¹ Matt. xxiv. 14.

against whom the highest guilt can be incurred, it does not, however, follow that sin before Christ was not in the proper sense sin; was not laden with guilt and punishable, although in different degrees and measure, and therefore was not in need of atonement. But from this, ripeness for eternal salvation or perdition cannot proceed. The definitive worth, or unworthiness, of the person cannot come forth, so long as it still stands in an undecided process, and the crisis lies before it.”¹ I will quote but one more sentence from this part of Dorner’s work: “As little as the sinful creature can have a right to God’s grace and to liberation from punishment, so, on the other hand, the administration of grace and of punishment is not arbitrary; rather it is bound to ethical laws, and since undoubtedly the sin is more grievous, more worthy of condemnation, which rejects with contempt and scorn even the highest manifestation of love, the forgiving, yes, even the atoning love, so is it also in accordance with righteousness that the judgment should

¹ Glaubenslehre, I., s. 177.

be determined by the position taken toward Christ." ¹

HAVING given thus a general statement of the ethical method and some tendencies of Dr. Dorner's system, I may properly be expected to indicate more definitely its relation to the received New England theology, as well as the service which it may render to our own evangelical theologians in the further development of their own principles. It would be a doubtful gain to transfer any foreign theology bodily into our seminaries; and growth is not to be made by cutting ourselves loose from our own roots in the sturdy character of New England, or despising the soil upon which we have been planted. We have our own individuality to preserve, and our own work to round out to perfection, in theology as in life. But we need to assimilate to our own thought, and to transform in our own life, the most Christian thought, and the best life, of other countries, or we shall be hopelessly hardened in provincialism. Especially should we be willing to turn with a teachable spirit to a

¹ Matt. xii. 20; Glaubenslehre, I., s. 178.

Christian theology which has grown up and shown its power to survive in the midst of an atmosphere of scepticism and rationalism; which has kept at least the substance of the faith in a land where evangelical belief has been compelled by hostile and searching criticism to make thorough work with the evidences of revelation, and the contents of our natural as well as Christian beliefs. The same questions are before us which have been for a longer time before faith in Germany; and if we too are to feel our way through their darkness and doubt, it must be in the same spirit of liberty and honesty in which German theology, under the conduct of men like Dorner or Weiss, is still following, and ever finding, its Lord.

The New England theology was at first providentially compelled to begin to work out the great problems of the ages in comparative isolation and independence. It had not much to work with besides the homely methods and clumsy forms of the Scottish philosophy and divinity. But it is one of the historical evidences of the providential election of great souls for great epochs that God put at the

source of New England theology a man of spiritually creative power, who not only could take up into his own life the strength there was in his surroundings, but whose thought transcended his times, and scattered around him the seed-principles, at least, of richer and better things. Not all of the truths germinant in the works of Jonathan Edwards have fully come even yet to their proper development in the received New England theology. The later so-called Edwardian theology, in New England, has run too much into a logic and dialectics of the truths of redemption—following, as is apt to be the case among disciples, the more formal and obvious characteristics of the master, and leaving comparatively disused the deeper ethical elements, and spiritual intimations, which lie as latent powers of development scattered through the writings of Edwards. Especially is this true in regard to the doctrines of sin, and the atonement, where the later New England theology, in its logical straightforwardness and formal governmental completeness, lacks spiritual power and ethical thoroughness.

From the prevailing theological dialectics—one might in some instances almost say, from the orthodox rationalism of the later New England theology—a reaction was inevitable both from within and from without; and that reaction is the main-spring of what is now popularly coming to be called the “new theology.” The reaction from within had its source in the natural mysticism of the human soul—in the spiritual consciousness of a presence, power, and love of God, beyond the grasp of the hands of our logic, deep, abiding, and true, as the instincts of the Christian soul, and the life of the spirit which is in man. To this spiritual need and experience the Scriptures are found to correspond;—a theology may be fully equipped with proof-texts and maintain the letter of Scripture, but to be really biblical it must have a heart, also, for the profound mysticism of Paul’s faith and John’s love. As the received governmental theology failed to satisfy what many felt to be the needs and teachings of their most religious experience, so also it seemed to come only into external contact with the profoundest passages and most

spiritual texts of the New Testament, and to be often more biblical in form than in substance.

The reaction came also from without,—through enlarging culture, and increasing acquaintance with Anglican theology, and more particularly with the development of modern German theology. It was stimulated and hastened also by a growing sense of the practical needs of the Christian pulpit in its spiritual wrestling with the unbelief of the world.

As is usual, indeed, with reversions from established forms, this reaction has at times gone beyond all bounds in transcendentalism, or has occasionally troubled with a lawless and impatient spirit the peace of our churches. But the reaction is a fact of our present spiritual life, and the movement of our theology forward is a present and powerful fact, and it should be freely and gratefully recognized by Christian wisdom and guided toward the most Christian results. To seek to stop it by building up ecclesiastical dams against it, would only cause a general inundation of the surrounding regions.

It should be observed that this movement has not had its origin in the desire to restate or to remove any special doctrine of our common creeds ; still less did it start from eschatological problems, or does it carry as its burden of thought any novel theory concerning the world to come. Its heart's desire rather is that all our Israel may be saved from ideas of God and his conduct of the universe which it cannot recognize as most thoroughly and ethically Christian, and which it fears are present hindrances and difficulties in the way of real, practical Christian faith, and the universal mission of Christian love in the world. One of its initial impulses, at first more felt than understood, was an inward reaction from what seemed to be formal, merely logical, distant conceptions of the one living God. The Christian God—the heart of the Gospel—became well nigh lost in verbal definitions of divine attributes, and abstract demands of abstract moral qualities, and external conceptions of sin and atonement, wanting in truthfulness to the deep personal sense of need, and to the new, gracious, most personal friendship

and union of the redeemed soul through faith with God in Christ. Many a student of theology began to feel, at first, as an indefinable sense of unreality and an unsatisfied longing for something going deeper down into his Christian life, this lack in a theology which has started from Edwards on the Will, rather than from Edwards on the Nature of the Spiritual and Divine Light, and the Religious Affections. Many for a season were driven back in this thirst and hunger of soul to the older Augustinian theology—to its deep moral realism—but they were nevertheless too genuine sons of Puritanism and New England to be able to tarry long in a system where full justice did not seem to be done to the idea of personality and the momentous fact of individual responsibility.

What was thus at first felt as a want and a longing has at length, in many minds, come to be clearly recognized in its principle; and help, refreshment, and new vitality of faith have been found, particularly in the ethical vigor of the best German evangelical theology. The ethical realism of theologians like

Dorner appeals at once to their profoundest sympathies, and they come from German theology back to their own work, upon their own soil, for their own inheritance, with fresh hope and heart. They come back to the home of their faith—not meaning that any man shall drive them from it, or any attraction of apparent freedom elsewhere shall tempt them to stray from it—seeking to hold the truth in openness of mind and humble charity, but conscious that there is to be a new work, the necessity of which is already upon us, and in which they may have some part, for the spiritual and ethical reconstruction of our New England theology.

It remains for me to indicate more particularly the relation of this special portion of Dorner's system, which I am now introducing, to our generally received New England theology. It is but justice to Dorner to state, that in the judgment of some most familiar with his work, this portion hardly equals in strength and positiveness of results some earlier portions of his system, as his discussion of sin or the atonement. But what writer, unless he be

a tremendous dogmatist, would regard his own treatment of eschatology as the most satisfactory part of his Christian thinking? If in some respects Dorner's views may seem to any to waver where more firmness of outline is biblically possible; if his summary of dogmatic results hardly seems to comprehend all that might be expected from a rigorous carrying out of his own principles; nevertheless it should be borne in mind that the same strenuous conception of human freedom which leads him to hesitate where a New England theologian would affirm moral certainty, also prevents him from falling into the tendency of some of the most devout German theologians, and teaching the doctrine of a final universal restoration.

One might hesitate to introduce Dorner's eschatology at the present time to the general public in this country, had it not already been imperfectly and crudely introduced to our religious world. As yet in many quarters the conditions for the full and free discussion of these themes seem to be wanting; and, indeed, before eschatology can be thoroughly reconsidered, especially in those phases of it

which in the history of theology have not hitherto been sufficiently considered, much preliminary work may need to be done with reference to the great underlying questions, beneath all these special inquiries, as to the nature, limits, and true relation to faith, of the Scriptures. Before men can reason together to any purpose concerning particular texts of the Bible, they have need to come to some understanding concerning the nature of a divine revelation and the relation of Scripture to that revelation; and also they will need to study carefully the scope, immediate object, and particular limits, of different passages of God's Word. Only in this way, and by the previous settlement of these biblical questions, can eschatology be profitably and thoroughly reconsidered. Certain moral conditions, also, are necessary to a wholesome theological discussion, productive of good fruits; and in times of general alarm, and, in some quarters, even of theological panic, continued searching and quiet thought are often better than eager utterance;—reverent, scholarly thought has always in it the promise of the future of theol-

ogy. It is not my purpose now, therefore, in doing what I may to allow Dorner an opportunity to be fairly heard for himself in this country, to defend his positions, or to appear in any way as the champion of a theology of which I would rather own myself to be a student. I am not prepared to say that I could endorse all his positions; still less, that without modification his dogmatic conclusions should be offered as common bread for Christians in our churches. But I am prepared to present his method of reasoning as a good example of a mode of theological discussion, especially with regard to the doctrines of the future life, which we need to see more of in our theological seminaries and in our religious literature. I am ready to maintain that the principles upon which Dorner proceeds are clearly Christian, and that the questions which he considers are proper questions upon evangelical ground. I go further, and maintain that they are questions which sooner or later our New England theology must fairly consider and determine in logical consistency with, and in moral loyalty to, its own distinctive principles and

historic mission. I add, then, a few words—not at present in defence or development of any views which I have been disposed to take into consideration upon this subject—but simply in elucidation of the relation of Dorner's views of the Christian judgment to certain principles and results of our own theology.

The older Calvinism was logically exempt from any consideration of the necessity of a Christian probation for every individual descendant of Adam. The race had already had its probation and failed ; and whatever opportunity besides might come to any individuals, would come only as a decree of sovereign grace. Strict Calvinism has no need of seeking to extend the idea of probation to elect infants, or to any heathen outside the limits of the decree of atoning grace. The idea of a future probation for any children of Adam who are not graciously called here, would have been a mere superfluity of doctrine to Calvinism—as the idea of a present individual probation in this world is almost a superfluity to unmodified Calvinism now. In entire consistency with its central constructive principle, it has no

place or use for these inquiries and ethical reasonings which Dorner is constantly bringing up.

But the New England modifications of pure Calvinism cannot be thought through without bringing into question the central principle of Calvinism, and leading eventually to a thoroughly Christian reconstruction of theology. After once opening the door to a host of new questions, the New England theology cannot, with either logical consistency or moral honor, suddenly shut the door against questions which follow naturally in the line of its own inquiries, but of which it has suddenly become suspicious or afraid.

When once the moral maxims were admitted into theology that obligation and ability are commensurate; that no man is guilty before personal choice; that man is accordingly by nature still capable of probation; that a moral person can be reprobated only upon the ground of personal determination in evil; and that the atonement was made for the whole world, and all men are to be finally judged by God in view of the sufficiency of Christ's sufferings;

then, this improved Calvinism was logically debarred, upon its own principles, from using, the short and easy answer to all questions about the non-elect and the heathen with which unmodified Calvinism could consistently put these difficulties aside. Let probation once be admitted to begin, not in the sin of the race, but for each individual in personal choice, and it cannot logically be conceived as closed in any other way. Let the atonement once be apprehended as a fact of central significance for the universe, grounded in the moral being of the Godhead, and then, whatever the theory held of its method, it must also be regarded as in some way central and vital in the destiny of every soul of man, Jew or Gentile, bond or free. The question as to the limits and end of probation is therefore necessarily given in the fundamental principles of the New England theology. It can withdraw from the determination of this question only by falling back, as some recent utterances of its leading representatives seem to show a tendency to do, into the shelter of the older Calvinism, from which, with much earnestness, it came forth.

It should be at once admitted that upon any theory it is difficult in this direction to work out our theology. The common, practical reply of faith to all these questions is, that in some way God will be just to all; or, as we should prefer to put it, in the spirit of Dörner's theology, In some way God will be Christian to all. If one simply says, without dogmatizing at all concerning the heathen, "The Bible was not given to teach what the Lord has in store for them—I know what is offered to me,"—in that answer there might be much both of the reality and the humility of faith. But if any theological opinion is ventured, we may expect it to be consistent not only with whatever hints or suggestions the course of revelation may have let drop upon this subject, but also with the fundamental principles, sacredly cherished among us, of individual responsibility, universal atonement, and Christian judgment; we must be careful that we do not let the work of moral trial and regeneration fall back into any merely physical process, and that our supposition, or speculation, be in entire harmony with our most eth-

ical Christian idea of God. Moreover, while speculative theology may require us to regard the possibility of repentance as involved always in the possession of moral freedom, practical theology will not forget that it is possible for a soul so to make evil its life, even upon a preparatory stage of revelation, as to render it morally certain that it would not repent though visited by an angel from a higher sphere. This possibility, I may say here, I have already had occasion carefully and definitely to state in a note upon a sermon in which the unsatisfactory character of the prevalent treatment of the doctrine of the intermediate life was mentioned, in the course of an endeavor to bring orthodox teaching with regard to the future life into more direct connection with existing unbelief.¹

Dr. Dorner's treatment of these subjects, as presented in the following pages, suggests one way, not without some support from the Scriptures, in which German theology may possibly

¹ Character may become so determined at a lower stage of revelation as to render it morally certain that it would not change under a higher revelation.—'The Orthodox Theology of To-day,' p. 180.

be brought to the help of New England theology in the further development of some of its own principles. Important, however, as many may deem this subject, I am free to acknowledge, even in the act of giving Dorner's fresh discussion of it to the press, that it does not seem to me to belong to the essence of faith, and is chiefly of interest to my own mind as it bears upon the more general and primary questions of our theodicy—of our whole endeavor, in the midst of modern unbelief, to make sure of the facts of a divine education and redemption of the world, and of a supreme revelation of God in the Word made flesh.

I would unhesitatingly so far welcome the help which Dorner brings to my faith as to say, If a Christian theologian may put forth a suggestion, not in itself contrary to Scripture, by means of which a possible reconciliation may be conceived of the antinomy between the absoluteness of Christianity and the particularism of Christian history, and by means of which we may be able to set the prophecy of a general judgment in the midst of our Christian idea of God,—then certainly faith may

rejoice and say, "*A fortiori* there must be a full and final reconciliation of these difficulties, though we may have caught as yet only a glimpse of it;" and we can drop the problem contentedly at the end of our farthest suggestion, waiting in trust for the perfect revelation of God's thought for the whole world in Christ.

We can be the more easily satisfied with possible suggestions upon this subject, when we remember what Schleiermacher pointed out, that eschatology is essentially prophetic; and its interpretation, therefore, is subject, necessarily, to the peculiar indefiniteness and perplexities which inhere in all unfulfilled prophecy. The prophetic character—fragmentary, metaphorical, undefined—having meanings beyond meanings, opening from immediate events or necessities out toward things unknown in the far future, and beyond present conception,—all this prophetic nature of the biblical eschatology renders intense minds peculiarly liable to misinterpret it; causes gross minds to strive for tangible beliefs which would grasp as with hands that which in the Scripture is left be-

yond man's reach ; and should, at the same time, lead sober minds to tolerance and humility in their judgments concerning the half-revealed mysteries of the hereafter. Experience would also seem to show that, especially in regard to these mysteries of faith, a large liberty of Christian thought is the only security both for the faith and the peace of the church.

Dorner's striking remark about Christology—all the more noteworthy because in the field of Christology he has done his greatest work—may serve as a general principle of Christian toleration: "Only those views should be rejected which prevent faith." Liberty for Christian thought—liberty for reverent and scholarly study and discussion—should be prized and most carefully guarded around those facts of revelation and redemption upon which the chief difficulties in our understanding of God's moral conduct of the universe most meet and centre. Thus, liberty of biblical criticism is now essential to faith because the providence of God has so ordered it that only through the most scholarly, conscientious

work in that direction can the fact of a divine revelation be brought again with commanding power to the recognition of a critical and sceptical age. Any ecclesiastical interference just now with the higher biblical criticism would not be conservatism—it would be hazardous to faith. So with regard to the nature of the atonement. Liberty of thought about Christ and the method of the atonement—within the limits of faith in Christ as our Redeemer—is vital almost in proportion as the fact of the atonement is essential to faith. If there must be dogmatism and intolerance, let it be over some minor question, as the mode of baptism, or the constitution of the church, where it may serve to cast moulds for congenial groupings of Christians, and may do Christianity itself comparatively little harm. But liberty rises in value as the objects of liberty are more sacred. It is most important in the apprehension of primal essential facts. Thus the fact of gravitation is elemental, but any prescription of a particular mode of conceiving that primal law of the creation—any intolerance toward new suggestions for its

explanation—might involve a mistake in the centre of the scientific explanation of the universe which should throw the whole development of science out of line. So some well-meaning mistake concerning the manner of revelation, or a slight error in our determination of the law of God's self-revelation culminating in Christ, if dogmatically insisted upon, and enforced as necessary to faith, might fasten upon the church a theology out of keeping with God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, which in time would involve the church in difficulties, straining faith and causing it to jar against, and to collide with, the constantly upturning facts of history and science, if it did not eventually bring the entire movement of Christian life to a standstill, wholly out of centre and harmony with the order of the creation. Whenever such want of harmony becomes increasingly apparent, it is a sign that we may need to readjust our doctrinal conceptions to the essential facts of Christianity. For the real conservation of faith, then, in the divine facts of Christianity, liberty of faith to think is doubly dear and doubly essential. To

abridge or deny it, would be to imperil faith, and to cut dangerously near the nerve of all Christian energy and missionary zeal at home and abroad.

Without feeling called upon, therefore, to adopt or to defend the dogmatic conclusions of Dorner in this portion of his theology—believing, indeed, that at some points his reasonings might be improved by attention to distinctions which our own theology has secured—nevertheless, I would maintain that our somewhat scanty teaching with regard to the future life and the last judgment may be decidedly enriched by the contributions of the German theologians, and that the following pages from Dorner illustrate the profounder ethical method, and that larger liberty of discussion, which we greatly need to cultivate in this country, especially upon these themes of immense practical concern, if our preaching of eternal retribution and the day of judgment is not to become in the ears of the people the echo of an empty faith.

I may express a feeling of personal thankfulness that I have been born and reared in a

religious denomination which has repeatedly shown, and that too with an emphasis increasing with every new occasion for it, that with us the Word of God is not bound, and that our chosen method is to preserve faith through liberty.

I should say that the following translation is in part new, and in part a careful revision of the translation already alluded to in Clark's Foreign Theological Library. I would also acknowledge my indebtedness for timely service in translating and preparing this volume for the press to Mr. A. D. Bissell, of the Yale Theological Seminary. I have omitted nothing from the text except the summaries of the literature at the beginning of the several sections, which would be of little value to American readers. I have added a few notes at points where Dorner's views have been misunderstood, or where I have thought they needed further elucidation, or application to questions now under discussion in this country.

NEW HAVEN, CONN., January 27, 1883.

THIRD DIVISION.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE LAST THINGS, OR OF THE CONSUMMATION OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

SEC. 151.

THERE is to be a consummation of individuals, and the whole, particularly of the Church, which, however shall not be realized through a purely immanent, continuous process, but only through crises and through the second coming of Christ.

Observation.—Eschatology comprises, first, the future up to the decision, not only the future of individuals (death and the intermediate state) but also the future of the kingdom of God upon earth, whereby the doctrine of Chiliasm and of the Antichrist comes into consideration. Secondly, the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, of the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment.

Conscience contains already in itself the fundamentals of an eschatology,¹ for the good is not yet believed

¹ Rom. ii. 13 ff.

in as the abiding, only true reality, if it is not believed in as the power to judge the world.¹ God cannot indeed will to compel the bad to become good; but should He suffer the evil to prevail eternally, there would be in Him no zeal for the honor of the good, or no power to make it effectually manifest. It would consequently be not only against the outward honor of God before the world, but also against His inner honor, if He were not the judge of the world; for He could not be indifferent toward the prevalence and dominion of the good in the world without indifference to the good in general. It belongs to the honor of the good, however, not only that it endures, and through a judgment shows itself superior to evil, but also that it reveals its inner wealth, its fullness of power. Therewith is determined negatively and positively a goal of the world. Heathenism has indeed very little eschatology. For it the questions concerning the whence and the whither recede before the life in the present. It moves only in the circle of the life of nature, and knows no absolute divine goal of the world, nor such a goal for the individual, but has merely attempts toward a doctrine of immortality and the end of the world, as also toward a cosmogony. In heathenism, independently of the dualistic religions, the majority think, so far as their

¹ Therefore already, in Gen. xviii. 25, God is conceived as judge of the world.

thoughts are directed at all toward the future, that the world will remain forever as it is; although to its constitution is attributed a restless mutability, which, however, does not tend toward a goal lying in a straight line before it, but at best runs in a circle which makes no progress. Also in the case of individual persons, where the future is indeed little thought of, but where its continuance is allowed,—that future continuance is granted in a form which fits into the fundamental conception of the course of a circle, *i.e.*, in the form of a wandering of souls, of a return measured by longer or shorter periods, but without recognizable progress as its result. When, with powerful awakening conscience, personal moral tasks come into consciousness, then only are there formed conceptions of the future separation of the good and evil, of punishments and rewards, and also the future of the world as a whole will be brought under an ethical point of view. Most heathen religions (also the lower dualistic) do not as yet reach the thought of a goal of the world, but remain held in alternation between periods of the victory of beneficent powers of light, and the dark, baneful powers, whether they remain standing in the cycle of the year, or advance to longer periods. The former is, for example, the case with the Egyptian and Syrian religions; the latter with Plato, Stoicism, and Buddhism. Simple alternation, however, is the opposite of

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progress, is anti-teleological. Only those dualistic religions, in which more definitely the opposition of the morally good and evil comes forth predominantly, concern themselves more with eschatology, and, in such a way that, after the changeful conflicts of the earthly world, a blessed goal of the world and an enduring victory of the good are held in prospect. So in the Persian; and, in part, in the Germanic religion.

2. But first in the sphere of revelation does such a teleology find a secure place, and here only a development of a doctrine of eschatology can arise, for here only is brought to consciousness the final goal for which the world was made, and which in the end must come forth in reality. The end, or the goal, determines at the same time the way to the goal. But two things are now to be taken into consideration. First, according to the Old Testament, eschatology is little more than the doctrine of future developments to be expected upon the earth, but beyond the earthly world-time the gaze was not usually extended. It was a future upon this side, not indeed a heavenly future, which the saints of the Old Testament had before their eyes. Further, it was, for this very reason, less the future of individual persons than of the people and the theocracy. That consists with the historical earthly task of this people, with the mission which Israel was to have for the history of religion.

This mission is given in the law built upon monotheism, and represented especially by prophecy, which announced with penetrative insight the destiny of the people, the judgments over it, the great judgment-day of the Lord, but also the Messianic time of bloom to follow upon it, which should also be for the good of the other nations. So far as the individual is concerned, the terrors of Hades (Sheol) were not overcome by the faith even of the Old Testament saints. Beginnings of the belief in immortality are at hand,¹ as indeed the knowledge is very old that death is not for man his normal state, but a contradiction to his idea. Enoch and Elias prove that communion with God is also a power over death, and so even the resurrection is already used as a figure for the restoration of the people. But nevertheless the conception of Sheol remains throughout the Old Testament essentially the same.² The just and unjust are gathered together in it; moreover, the former regard Hades as a loss in comparison with this earthly life. A doctrine of the separation of the two, always in accordance with their deserved lot, is not yet to be found. In one word, over the final fate of individuals, the

¹ Ps. xvi. 10. xvii. 15. xlix. 15. Is. xxvi. 19. liii. 10. Hos. xiii. 14. Dan. xii. 2. [Ez. xxxvii. 3-6.] Comp. p. 101, note.

² Comp. Oehler: O. T. Theol. i., 253-265; II., 304 ff. Schultz: O. T. Theol. ed. 1, I., 360 ff., 396 ff.; II., 136, 210-220, and Kahle, *ut supra*, p. 305 ff.

pious and the godless, the Old Testament gives no more definite prospect.¹

3. Christianity is first the absolutely teleological religion, and points on to a definite decision in the future for individuals and for the whole. In the Old Testament Christianity is itself the essential contents of eschatology. So one might think, after Christianity has become historical, prophecy then is at an end—all is now fulfilled. And that was the expectation of the disciples of the Lord, as it had been of the prophets, that the end, the consummation of the world, should come at once with the Messiah; that the Messiah, first of all, would execute judgment, and the revelation of his power would be the first event. But in opposition even to the Baptist,² Christ expressly designated the judgment as not his first, but his last work, and since he must appear, not at first in glory but in humiliation, suffering, and dying, so should thereby the end of the world be put off, and to the first presence (*parousia*) of Christ there was added the expectation of a second upon the ground of Christ's own most definite promises. That the coming of Christ should be divided into a first and second, was not necessary simply on account of the atonement, because the redemptive work required the self-sacrifice of Christ in suffering and death; but it

¹ Oehler, *ut supra*, s. 264 f.

² *Com. Matt.* iii. 10-12, with *Jn.* iii. 17.

was also involved in the necessity of an ethical process in those who are to be redeemed. Not the glory and the beholding the power of Christ might be the first thing, for the beholding might have falsified the motives for devotion to Christ, and have done harm to the ethical character of faith. Likewise through this delay of the revelation of the glory of his person and his kingdom, which at all events seemed only short to the primitive Christian faith, the sure occurrence of the decision which was expected of the Messiah was not rendered in the least doubtful. Rather just because the highest spiritual good is already come in the Gospel, the Christian, God-trusting faith knows also that now the power of the consummation is here, to bring all into decision for or against the good, and to cause the worth or worthlessness of every individual definitely to appear, so that now first through the Gospel all shall become ripe for the judgment. Thus there lies in Christian faith, as such, a pregnant eschatological element. Faith has already experienced so much from Christ's efficient work, that, in the presence of that which may be still lacking, however much it may be, it possesses not a hope merely, but the certainty, that the divine world-idea will not remain simply a beautiful, but powerless, image of phantasy; and Christ, according to the absolute power dwelling in him over sin, the world, the devil, and death, shall not leave the work which he

has begun in ruins, and as a fragment, but shall bring it to completion.

In faith the Church perceives already Him who is to come again, as he unceasingly, and not delaying, moves on to the end through his unbroken activity in the world. And, under this aspect, faith knows that with Christ's appearance already the beginning of the judgment and the end is come.¹ Believers are not confined to a thinking or a wishing with regard to the future. The Christians are a prophetic race;² they know of the end and the consummation of the work of God which has been begun. And thus Christian wisdom forms her conceptions of the end or ideals, and through these the Christian hope—the immediate fruit of faith—anticipating the end; and from hope it draws the brave heart of love in order in true steadfastness (*ὑπομονή*) to will the right end in the right way.

4. The distinguishing characteristic, however, of Christian eschatology is its relation to the person of Christ, which is expressed with special clearness in the doctrine of Christ's second coming. Christ's person, which is thought of in the New Testament as continually working in a living way, but which in its time shall also appear again visibly, imparts to all portions of the doctrine of Christian eschatology their stamp

¹ Jn. iii. 19; xii. 47 ff.

² 1 Peter i. 3, 4. Comp. ii. 9.

and color. Not only shall the final destiny of every one be determined according to his relation to Christ, and, for the blessed, communion with him form the central point of blessedness; not only shall he be the judge of the world, because he is the son of man; but he shall also awaken the dead, and believers shall become in the resurrection like his glorified body; also the nature of the intermediate state depends upon the relation to him, while the duration of it depends upon the occurrence of his second advent for judgment. And finally, moreover, with his name and his continuous working are bound together all conflicts and advances of the kingdom of God, of which he is the Head. If dogmatics suffers him to recede into the background with reference to the consummation, it would make him a person of transitory importance—which would inevitably work backward, shaking the whole Christology, and the doctrine of the self-revealing God.

5. The presupposition of the consummation of the Church and the kingdom of God, is the perfecting of the individual believers. Again, since individuals depart from this earth without being already holy,¹ the perfection of individuals is dependent upon their continued personal existence or immortality, which,

¹ Also according to the *Cat. Maj.*, 501, 502, shall we first at the resurrection become entirely pure and holy. *Comp. For. Con.*, 719, 7; sin inheres also in the soul.

however, is still to be distinguished from the resurrection. There is no evidence which compels belief in immortality; as was shown in the doctrine of man, it stands fast upon the fact of the possession of the image of God, *i.e.*, in the last relation, on God.¹ The true conception of God places the worth of man and of personality so high, and God's will of love for communion with man so firm, that immortality has therein its pledge. On account of his essential relation to God man has the infinite destination and ordination not to die, which comes through God for believers to its full realization of eternal life. But also the relation of the wicked to God is a relation of infinite importance such as nature has not. Some (and not simply the Socinians) allow immortality only to the regenerate,² while annihilation befalls the incorrigibly wicked.

Observation.—For the opinion that man has no natural immortality, but that it is first a gift of Christian grace, many voices in the ancient church declare themselves, *e.g.*, B. Arnobius, and compare the article Tatian by Möller, in Herzog's *Th. Real-Encyc.* So Weisse, Rothe, and others; but especially in the most recent times this opinion

¹ Matt. xxii. 29–32. Comp. above, vol. i sec. 42.

² This, according to Dodwell, is imparted through the mediation of the true church, and the sacraments, consequently not to the dissenters.

has been represented by Edward White.¹ It may be urged in behalf of this view that immortality cannot be assumed in the sense that the soul by virtue of its own power cannot die. We have seen before² that the proof of the immortality of the soul from the simplicity of its being will not hold. According to Psalm civ. 29, if God withdraws his breath, the consequence is that the creature perishes. In fact, our soul does not have by nature life in itself, *i.e.*, the power of life, for then it would have aseity, which Rothe, indeed, ascribes to the spirits made perfect, but which in the proper absolute sense belongs only to God (of whom it is said he alone has immortality); in a relative sense, indeed, also to the creature; but only so, that God, in every moment, lets his preserving will work together with it. But if, according to this, it is also admitted that, as in reference to the body, so also in reference to the soul in itself considered, the formula is to be rejected: *non potest mori*, as well as the other formula, *non potest non mori*: it does not follow from that, directly, that any actual human being will fall a prey to annihilation, and only the regenerate be really immortal; for it remains possible that to all men a continuing existence may be lent from God. In no event can the death of the body be regarded, with materialism and pantheism, as the cause also of the death of the soul

¹ In his work, *Life in Christ*, translated into French by Byse, under the title, *L'Immortalité Conditionnelle*, Paris, 1880, who adduces a long list of representatives of the same opinion from Switzerland, England, and North America; and from Germany, beside Rothe, H. Schultz, Gess, with doubtful right, also, Nitzsch.

² Vol. i., sec. 42.

for the unregenerate. Rather must we abide by this, that the human soul is already, in itself, superior to the potencies of nature, and unreachable by them; consequently, at all events, it may survive the destruction of the body. It would be still another question whether the soul, through hostile powers within itself, *i.e.*, through evil, might not become decayed, and be given over to destruction, concerning which we shall have something to say further on. In our present connection, it is sufficient to see the possibility of the harmonious perfection of the kingdom of God given in this, that the prospect lies before us of its becoming free from all hindering hostile powers—namely, if they do not choose to be embodied in it, thereby either they shall fall a prey to destruction, or they shall remain banished from the perfected kingdom of God. Only on the supposition that a being which was human could pass over into a lower class of existence, so that the possession of the image of God in it should be absolutely extinguished, could that capacity also for immortality be extinguished in it.

6. Christianity, however, does not simply announce immortality; there is also, according to it, a consummation for the individual.¹ A simple progression into infinity cannot be sufficient for the taking away of evil. Evil is no infinite greatness like the good. It may be said, indeed, perfection would be uniformity. But rather it is the nature of evil to tend toward the sameness of death; vitality and richness lie in that which is positive, in the spirit and the divine good,

¹ Phil. i. 6. Eph. i. 3, 4. 1 Cor. xv. 22.

which also shall not fail of its corresponding nature for its self-manifestation in the individual and in society. Sin hinders the unfolding of the personality according to the rich manifoldness of the powers which are designed for harmonious co-working ; but the power of evil can never prevent the consummation of believers, for it is indeed absolutely condemnable, yet not absolutely strong, but a finite quantity ; while, on the other hand, the power of redemption is an infinite one. It is the power of unquenchable eternal life, which shall never be conquered, so that already, through the simple, continuing growth of the power of sanctification, evil must be overcome and excluded.

7. But as believers, instead of remaining as a fragment shall attain perfection, so also shall the Church and the kingdom of God.¹ The isolated individual cannot be made perfect ; that would be no true consummation, for he is also a member and needs the whole for his own perfection in blessedness ; the consciousness of the race, which is made perfect in love, cannot attain, without fellowship, its absolute satisfaction and realization. Moreover, without the individuals, who also have to carry in themselves the whole, in whom the whole must live,—without their preservation and perfection, there would be no consummation for the whole organism ; the members—

¹ John x. 16. xvii. 13. 19. 23. Eph. i. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 28.

the whole and the parts—demand each other mutually for their perfection. More specifically, there belongs to the perfection of the whole :

First. The full number of members who constitute the organism. Consequently the succession of generations must first follow one another long enough, the securing of living members from them must continue long enough, for all its essential members to be embodied in the organism. It may not be concluded from this, that either all men, as sanctified members, will be embodied in this organization, or, with the falling away of any, this organism must remain unperfected. For, independently of this consideration, that God, if he had fore-knowledge of what is free, could have also drawn up the idea of the organism, taking into the account those who shall exclude themselves from it ; He can also, by virtue of his creative power, allow the succession of the generations to continue so long that the number shall be filled which is necessary for the whole. Consequently, should any fall out, then a compensation through the divine creative power would have to be supposed.¹

Secondly. To the actuality of the consummation of the Church belongs also a cessation of reproduction, through which there is constantly renewed a world which the Church must subdue ; but that presupposes

¹ Comp. Matt. xxv. 28. There are not wanting talents enough for the work.

a transforming of earthly relations. To marry and be given in marriage¹ belongs to the present æon, which did not always exist, as little as this earth of ours, and likewise will not always exist. Granting that it might be said with some teachers, that the power of regeneration, seizing the entire person, will also sanctify the offspring, and that thereby a pure life will be transmitted to the children—a view, however, favored neither by Scripture nor experience—this would also involve an essential change of the earthly relations, to say nothing of the fact that regeneration can never become a matter of generation without losing its ethical character.² That body and spirit in the present æon are asymptotes, is shown by the old age and death of Christians. The bodily and spiritual organism are still so loosely connected, and so external to one another, that both have their special centres, and their own laws of life, which is necessary on account of the moral calling of man.³

Thirdly. In the perfected kingdom of God none who is impure can have a place, but the number which actually comprises the kingdom must contain what belongs to the perfect body of Christ, and those who are not to be received into it must also stand outside the idea of the perfected kingdom of God.

¹ Luke xx. 35.

² John iii. 8.

³ Comp. above, Vol. 1, Sec. 39.

Observation.—For obvious reasons the old dogmatics have not sufficiently developed eschatology. Compared with other dogmas this doctrine lacks both precision and certainty. The New Testament even, as we shall see, leaves many enigmas and undetermined points remaining; therefore the eschatological portion of doctrine may rightly be called, with Schleiermacher, prophetic. But the statements of the New Testament are here prophetic, also, in the sense that there are not wanting great fixed lines which permit an eschatological doctrine to be laid down. In the ecclesiastical eschatology hitherto, however, the following defects are particularly prominent: First, So far as individuals are concerned, it supposes between this present existence and the consummation no such intermediate state as to prevent a decision being reached over all—over their definitive worth and destiny—with the conclusion of this life. Secondly, If death at once decides everything, then that would anticipate the final judgment, not only with reference to the lot of the wicked, but also of believers. For even the importance of the resurrection seems threatened if immediately after death, without any limitation, blessedness ensues. Thirdly, It is suspicious, moreover, that the interest for holiness recedes behind the interest for blessedness, as appears in this, that the old dogmatics make complete freedom from all imperfection and sin follow for the justified, without further ado, upon the laying aside of the body. So far as relates to the whole, the old dogmatics, in the first place, have not been agreed in the choice between the twofold possibility of the consummation, as either a new creation, or the summit of a development; further, whether the latter will be a purely imma-

nent and gradual process, or by means of crises, and in such a way that the severest conflicts will take place at the end; finally, whether the victory of the heavenly forces will be brought to pass abruptly, or whether a process of interpenetration of the earthly with the heavenly influence, ethically mediated, is to be supposed. Further, the uncertainty as to what the antichristian power is (whether a universal heathen state, or Mohammedanism, or the Papacy, or whether it be in general powers of lying and hate within the church, which enter into league with the world-power for the persecution of believers), has influence again upon the question of the millennium and its conception, as well as upon the idea of the nature and time of Christ's second coming. Moreover, down to our own times, different opinions prevail as to whether the earthly life of mankind is meant merely to have the importance of a probation and preparation for another life, in which first the real end of life lies; or whether, also, there fall within this present life morally valuable ends and works of eternal significance, in which already elements of the realization of the goal of the world are to be seen. This is closely connected with the question whether, as the Old Testament and the doctrine of a millenium assume, this earthly arena (and this world-period) are capable of, and should be deemed worthy to become, a representation of the kingdom of God, or whether the realization of the kingdom of God should be conceived purely as heavenly and above this earth. Finally, the doctrine of the old dogmatics concerning the consummation of the world is too spiritualistic, and does not know how to assign to nature enough significance in relation to the spirit. To come approximately to

a decision upon these questions ought not to be regarded as impossible. If eschatology, in the ancient church, assumed a dominating position over the whole faith, so that even Christology was powerfully determined and furthered by it, so now the other dogmas in their rich development have in turn to render service to eschatology.¹

¹ This is a fruitful suggestion for the reconsideration of eschatology. Most of the questionings and doubts concerning the received doctrines of the future life do not come to us from without the Church, but have their source in the heart of faith. It is the Christian spirit that prompts to renewed searching of the Scriptures upon these dark problems of retribution. Have we brought all the Scriptural teachings and suggestions into our dogmas concerning these subjects? Do the Scriptures give us a clear, harmonious, and full disclosure, or only a prophetic revelation of the future life—a revelation adapted to present practical ends? These are questionings, not of doubt, but of faith, and they can be met only as we may be able to follow the suggestion given above, and to harmonize our eschatology with the present “rich developments” of other doctrines.—TR.

THE FIRST DOCTRINAL PART.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST WITH ITS PREPARATION IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

SEC. 152.

INDIVIDUALS, as well as the Church and the kingdom of God, await their consummation from the second coming of Christ, which forms the centre of the whole eschatology of the New Testament, and serves not only for the overcoming of all hostile powers, but also for the realization of the idea both of the individual and the Whole. This second coming is not made dispensable or superfluous by any previous development of the individual and the Whole in this world or the next, since it alone brings the complete conquest of sin and death—to the individual in the resurrection, and to the Whole by the transfiguration of the world, by the exclusion of evil, and the consummation of the church of God.

I.—*The Biblical Doctrine of Christ's Second Coming.*

The expectation of Christ's personal reappearing, held by the entire primitive church, and even by the apostles, is rooted not simply in their personal wishes, or even in their earthly hopes of the Messiah, but is based upon various discourses of Christ himself,¹ which treat expressly of his second coming at the end of the world. Attempts have been made in different ways to explain away these declarations of Christ. Some suppose a wrong understanding of the words of Jesus on the part of the disciples. Others would limit the discourses concerning the second coming to an announcement of the resurrection of Christ. Others think to find relief by explaining, *e.g.*, in accordance with Luke, the two other synoptics. Others, still, get rid of the problem by assuming that Christ himself has erred in the discourses in question, which they would find compatible with his dignity. To the

¹ Matt. xxiv. and xxv. Mark xiii. Luke xxi. (Comp. xvii. 20-37; xii. 39, 40, 42-46); Matt. xxv. 1-13; 14-30. 31-46. Comp. Luke xix. 11 sq. Mark viii. 38; ix. 1; x. 28 sq.; xiv. 25, 62, with the parallel passages; Luke xii. 35-38. Matt. x. 23; xiii. 34-30; xxviii. 20. Acts i. 11. 2 Thess. ii. 8. 1 Thess. iv. 15 sq.; v. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 23. Phil. iv. 5. 1 John ii. 18. 1 Peter iv. 7. James v. 8. Rev. i. 3. iii. 11; xix. 11; xx. 4, 11; xxii. 7; x. 12.

latter it has been rightly replied ' that the thought of the parousia on the lips of Jesus cannot be deemed a conception lying only on the periphery and accommodated to the times ; but that it would have touched the centre of Jesus' thought of salvation, if he could have erred with reference to the announcement of his parousia ; ' for, as Schleiermacher rightly saw, Christ's second coming forms the real centre of the entire Christian eschatology, ' and we shall recognize its dogmatic importance in reference to the person, office, and kingdom of Christ, however important it may be to take into account the figurative phraseology in the exposition of this fundamental thought. A warning against ascribing a subordinate importance to the parousia-discourses should have been found in the circumstance, that the eschatology of the Old Testament and the Jewish expectation of the Messiah generally contain no idea answering to the second parousia, but regard everything as given and decided at once with the appearance of the Messiah, and that all pre-Christian conceptions are essentially modified by the

¹ So by Weissenbach ; *Der Weiderkunftsgedanke Jesu*, 1873, p. 31-37, who would refer the words of Jesus about his second coming to the resurrection.

² Also the many testimonies to Christ's announcement of his second coming agree so well that they cannot rest upon a misunderstanding of the disciples.

³ *Chr. Glaube*, ii., s. 483, sec. 150, 3.

announcement of a second parousia of Christ. The Old Testament prophets had spoken of the day of the Lord, the great judgment-day of God, as the first act of the Messianic age which decides everything. Christ set forth still another parousia as the first, and the judgment only as the last.¹ But the expression parousia certainly has various meanings. Christ promises that he will be present (*παρὼν*) in all events and developments of his earthly church, and will always accomplish what it needs, which presupposes not merely his continued life and participation in his church, but also his continuous activity and power, which can and will stand security for the church. He therefore thinks of this presence of his (*παρουσία*) as in part invisible, but always as real—the former, when he says: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;”² or: “I am with you always, to the end of the world;” or when he promises: “If any man love me, I will love him, and manifest myself unto him, and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him and make our abode with him;”³ or when

¹ Comp. my Hist. of Doctr. of Person of Christ, I. 241 sq. All that is known to the pre-Christian Jewish Apocalypics also is, that on his appearance the Messiah will at once found a kingdom of earthly prosperity. A double parousia it knows not; that which later seems to comprehend it vanishes as a deception.

² Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20.

³ John xiv. 18, 21, 23, 28; also xiv. 3. may be applied here.

he says of faith in general that it receives him.¹ The whole doctrine of his word and the means of grace is only understood in its real divine-human import when these means of grace are regarded as the outward media, through which, in virtue of his heavenly, regal office, he efficaciously continues his presence with believers. But he also promised his *visible* second advent. Here come in his reappearances after his resurrection, which as a fulfilment of his prediction,² on the one hand, seal the certainty of his enduring, invisible communion with them, and on the other were to be a real foretype of his visible, universally discernible, second coming at the judgment and consummation of the world. We have to linger with this latter return. With reference to that, His parousia in the course of history has the significance of its preparation. This all the apostles and ancient Christendom maintain with all the energy of love and hope as their dearest faith. Their longing anticipated his second coming earlier than the event showed.³ It is in keeping with this fact that so little is found in the New Testament respecting the state of individuals between death and the resurrection. But more intimations are given respecting the phases of development through which the kingdom of Christ on earth has to

¹ John vi. 50-58.

² John xvi. 16 ff.

³ Heb. x. 37. 2 Pet. iii. 9, 10. Jas. v. 8, 9. 1 Thess. iv. 15 ff. 2 Thess. ii. 7 ff. 1 John ii. 18.

run in conformity with Christ's own lot until his second coming. These phases are so viewed that Christ's second coming is not superseded by them, but appears still more necessary. Nor ought the millenium, according to the meaning of the Revelation of John, to be conceived as forestalling Christ's coming again to judgment.¹ Else there would arise a collision with the general type of New Testament teaching. But the biblical doctrine of the antichristian powers is of importance for the apprehension of the entire history of the kingdom of the future.

The New Testament does not agree with a theory which assumes merely a quiet, steadily growing interpenetration or subjugation of the whole world by Christianity in the course of history. This is the optimistic view, which is prepared for no eclipses of the sun in the firmament of the church. The New Testament foretells catastrophes to the life of the church, so that in this respect also it is a copy of the life of Christ; and indeed catastrophes arise not only through persecutions on the part of heathen and Jews in its beginning, but also out of itself; *i.e.*, from its outer circle, on the ground of intimations of Christ² according to John and Paul,³ when the Christianizing of the na-

¹ Comp. Briggs, *ut supra*. This is clear from what follows first after chap. xx.

² Matt. vii. 21; xxiv. 11, 12, 24. Mark xiii. 6, 22.

³ 1 John ii. 18, where antichrists are spoken of in the plural. 2 Thess. ii., 3 ff., *ἀνόμος*.

tions shall be already advanced, false prophets and pseudo-Messiahs will arise, who will desire to enter into confederacy with Satan, and in part also with the world-power, against Christians, and to seduce to denial of Christ. These are the powers of antichrist which are conceived indeed as already working in the days of the apostles, and are to be discerned by believers,¹ but which strive after still more concentrated manifestation, and shall attain in the end still greater power. In Revelation the same thing has other names. Besides Satan, mention is here made of the πόρνη (whore)² and of false prophets.³ The "beast" of Revelation⁴ is the world-power hostile to God. The antichristian power is a union of the falsification of the truth and divine worship with the hostile world-power, the result of which is a pseudo-Messiahship. Paul seems to regard the man of sin as an incarnation of the evil antichristian power, and as an individual.⁵ He is called by Paul the adversary who raises himself against everything that is called God and the worship of God. With his denial of God and blasphemy are

¹ 2 Thess. 2, 7.

² Rev. xvii, 1, 5. 15 ff.; xix. 2.

³ Rev. xvi. 13; xix. 20; xx. 10. Comp. 2 Peter ii.

⁴ Rev. xiii. 1 ff.; xiii. 11 ff.; xiv. 9 · xv. 2; xvi. 10; xvii. 8 ff.; xix. 19; xx. 10.

⁵ In John also ἀντίχριστος occurs in the singular. 1 John ii. 22; iv. 8 ff. 2 John 7.

connected self-deification and false worship.¹ He is still hindered in his coming forth by the *κατέχων* (state and law). He himself is called the lawless, not because he goes forth from the heathen, but because he casts aside all bonds in a false freedom and caprice.² Before the end a revelation is to be expected of this evil power standing in connection with Satan, and at the same time an apostasy from Christianity.³ Directly, however, upon the supremacy of the anti-christian powers, as to which there is agreement in the New Testament, will follow the manifestation of Christ's glory and power which is connected with the second coming of Christ.⁴

Here a difference emerges between Revelation and the other New Testament writings. While the latter join the judgment and the consummation of the world to Christ's second advent, Revelation interposes another phase. It makes a thousand years' of the dominion of Christ fall into this earthly world-period, and before the final decisive struggle and the victory of Christ. But the meaning of the passage is disputed. According to one interpretation, the martyrs and saints will be previously raised to life in a first resurrection with glorified bodies. According to others,

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 4.

² 2 Thess. ii. 3-7.

³ Ibid. ii. 3. Revelation speaks of a mark of the beast.

⁴ 2 Thess. ii. 3. Rev. xix., and xx. 2-7.

their resurrection only means endowment with power in order to their reigning with Christ.¹ It is further disputed, whether according to Revelation Christ will be visible upon earth during the millennium, or will come again at the millennium only in the sense of the triumph and glorious manifestation of the power of the Gospel—upon which depends the other question, whether the joint reigning of the saints with Christ will take place invisibly and therefore spiritually in heaven, while the earth remains the old earth, or else upon earth.² After the millennium Revelation regards Satan as loosed once more for a short time, and Gog and Magog are to march against the holy city, whereby consequently the earthly relations in the millennium are viewed as essentially the same

¹ In Rev. xx. 6, it is merely said that they are raised to inner life, not that they have already a resurrection-body. If the *πρώτη ἀνάστασις* signifies that a second still follows for them, by the first resurrection might be understood their rising again in a spiritual sense, as a second coming of Elias is seen in the Baptist. Matt. xvii. 12. Mark ix. 11–13. But if they are raised in body, this may contain a hint that the resurrection of the body does not take place at once for all humanity, but ever according to the state of ripeness.

² Bengel takes the first view. On the other hand, v. Hofmann and Flürcke think that during the millennium a portion of the earth (Palestine) will be glorified, the rest of the earth not,—a thought in agreement with the eminent importance which they with others believe must be assigned to the Jewish nation in relation to the consummation of the world.

as the old ones. But if this is so, it is not probable that the author is thinking of a *visible* government of Christ with saints raised in glorified bodies on the *old earth*. Neither Christ's visible return, nor a glorifying and transforming of the world, is promised in the Apocalypse for the thousand years' kingdom, but the only characteristic of Christ's second coming mentioned with certainty is the joint reigning of the saints with Christ upon thrones, and the temporary binding of Satan's power, which latter may just as well take place on the outwardly unchanged earth as the time of the unchaining of his power. Only after the last conflict with the antichristian powers follow the last judgment¹ and the revelation of Christ in glory, together with the account of the new heaven and the new earth, and, with these cosmical changes, the general resurrection is connected.²

Paul has not this doctrine of the millenium. But he seems, however, to have expected a flowering-time for Christianity in the earthly world-period, before the end of the world, in consequence of the Christianization of all nations and also of the Jews.³

¹ Rev. xx. 10 sq.

² Rev. xx. 11-15; xxi. 1. Comp. 2. Peter ii.

³ Rom. xi. 15.

II.—*The Church Doctrine of the History of the Kingdom of God up to the Second Coming of Christ.*

In the ancient church, up to Constantine, was understood by the antichrist chiefly the heathen state, and, to some extent, unbelieving Judaism (which vied with it in hatred against Christianity); and the consummation of the kingdom of God was expected from its overthrow, while the perfecting of individuals was looked for in their resurrection. From Augustine's day the church became accustomed to regard the *Civitas Dei* as substantially realized in the world, especially where the state was subordinated to its ordinances. In this way down into the middle ages the basis was taken away for a doctrine of a future antichrist, and a future thousand years' reign. The eschatological hope cooled off, nay, froze, in growing self-contentment, on the part of the church, with its external splendor; but Mohammedanism, so long as it was dangerous, took the place of the antichrist, yet without exerting any influence of importance upon the form of eschatology. The Reformation, under the impression of the profound corruption within the church itself, in the conflict with this corruption, saw in its centre the Roman papacy, the antichrist. The ardor of eschatological expecta-

tions revived somewhat again in the sixteenth century, and sketched for itself fantastic and revolutionary pictures of the future in the Anabaptist commotions, in which carnal notions of a millennium fermented. The Judaistic, theocratic confounding of the civil and ecclesiastical in Anabaptism was rejected by the Reformers, whose chief concern was about the certainty of reconciliation and eternal life, not about the sensuous well-being and satisfaction of the outward man. Thus it was not merely a matter of policy to separate from the chiliastic movements of the sixteenth century, but an inner necessity, and the *Conf. Aug.* rejects such carnal Chiliasm on this ground. On the other hand, the Reformation, like ancient Christendom in its way, had not at once a consciousness of the world-historical work for humanity, the State, and the entire world of culture, imposed on the Protestant principle; but was conscious of inwardly sharing in the supreme good, in faith and the certainty of justification, without seeking, especially in the Lutheran Confession, a more precise, positively influential relation to the State, which was left free on principle. If the supreme good is already given, a further advance of history may seem superfluous, and so, in fact, in the Evangelical Church the approaching end of the world was expected. Not that the hope of the consummation of Christ's kingdom was given up; but, without entering into the consideration of the medi-

ation required for it, it was conceived as abruptly establishing itself with Christ's second coming—a purely divine work in a new heaven and a new earth, after the destruction of the present world. And in the same manner for the individual, just as for the church, the moral process was abridged, because everything seemed to be so given with the beginning—faith—that death was conceived as leading immediately to inner perfection. Justification was so closely connected in thought with blessedness that the latter was represented as given of itself by the resurrection in a new glorified world, without the reservation of a mediating moral development of the person, consequently through a physical process. The consequence of holding that, according as one departs from the world believing or not believing, his eternal, happy, or unhappy fate is already decided, was necessarily an emptying, and therefore an abolition, of the intermediate kingdom, to which indeed such great abuses had already become attached. Essential importance scarcely remains even for the judgment, and the significance of the resurrection for blessedness, if all believers enter at once into blessed life, and the impenitent into damnation. The second coming of Christ himself, supposed to be near at hand, was so conceived that the consummation of the world presupposed a destruction of the world. Not a renewal of the old, but the creation of a new world, was ex-

pected, for example, by Gerhard and Quenstedt—a view which was closely connected with the prevalence of a spiritualistic conception and a contempt for matter and nature. As there was no thought of a new world-historical mission of the evangelical church, so particularly there was no thought of the conversion of heathen and Jews, contrary to the words of Jesus and his apostles.

It is sufficient, so the dogmatic theologians thought, if out of every nation merely a sample are saved. The Jews could be judged because their fathers, and to some extent they themselves, might have had the Gospel; but the heathen, because they, forsooth, might come to Christendom, and there obtain Christianity.¹ A different tone has prevailed in the evangelical church only since Spener's day. With him evangelical faith, inspired with new life, advanced as in the early Christian time to hope; and since hope sketches for itself ideals of the period of consummation, this hope kindled the mind for the world-historical mission of the church, and, as in the beginning, the Christian spirit turned from eschatology to the Church's work of love in the earth, to foreign, and soon also to home missions.² The conversion of

¹ Dorner's view of the manner in which this orthodoxy enervated missionary zeal in the evangelical church in Germany, is worthy of attention.—Tr.

² This was a return to the principle upon which Jesus com-

the heathen and of Jews begins to enter with Spener into the circle of Christian hope among evangelicals, and is recognized as the preliminary condition of Christ's second coming and the consummation. Upon this naturally followed again an approximation to the doctrine of the millennium in the form of the "hope of better days." Still delight in work of this kind remained somewhat isolated, until in the present century, with increasing force, Protestantism began to comprehend its historical mission to its own people abroad and at home. For this reason, all questions touching Christ's second coming, especially its preliminary condition—the conversion of the Jews and heathen, the doctrine of antichrist, the millennium), have again in recent days come into lively discussion. However different the theories on many points in this respect (*e.g.*, whether a visible rule of Christ upon earth with risen saints before the end of the world, whether a millennium in any sense, is to be taught; whether it lies behind us, whether the antichrist is to be regarded as a principle revealing itself in many persons in the entire course of history, or as a person in whom evil is concentrated), on this point there is

manded his disciples to preach his Gospel to all nations. Missions should rest upon the Christian law of love;—the love of Christ constrained the first great missionary apostle. So universal a cause cannot without hazard be made to rest upon the apex of some particular point of doctrine.—TR.

increasing agreement, that the judgment is impossible before all nations have heard the Gospel and had the possibility of believing; and the tendency is more and more to believe that the process of consummation in the case of individuals and of the whole must be conceived not as merely physical, accomplished either through death or the transformation of the world, or through the external power of Christ, but as at the same time running its course according to ethical laws.

Observation.—*Chiliasm* has taken very different forms. Its crudest form looked for a happy kingdom of sensuous enjoyments and outward splendor. In one word, it is eudæmonistic. Such was the Chiliasm of antiquity and the Anabaptist Chiliasm of the age of the Reformation. In it the rule of the saints over the heathen and unbelievers plays a great part. The older Chiliasm is specially distinguished from the Anabaptist by this feature, that it passively awaits Christ's second coming and the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem, and at most requires (in Montanism by a direction of its prophets) a moral preparation for the millennium, whereas the fanatical and revolutionary Chiliasm of the Anabaptists would hasten the coming of the millennium by its own action, nay, itself finally introduce and establish it by means of force. In the older Chiliasm, as in the age of the Reformation, less stress falls on the visible presence of Christ's person and on the inner rule of the Christian spirit, than upon the visible issuing forth of the power and glory of his kingdom as a *dominion* of the saints, not merely

their deliverance from hostile oppression or from evils, which the present state of nature brings with it. The more abrupt the *form* in which the opening of the chiliastic world-period is conceived, the less the interest in an ethical mediation of the consummation. The gross, carnal style of thought which was able, in the two chief forms just mentioned, to unite itself with the circle of ideas of the early Christian millenium, usually in our days lets drop the connection with Christianity and its hopes. All the more common, on the other hand, in our days, are other Chiliasms of a more spiritual tone, whose common character is that they despair of the possibility of mankind being saved, and the church rescued from inner and outer dissolution, with the means hitherto at the service of Christianity—Chiliasms which look for a new glorious flowering-time of the church under the government of Christ, visible or invisible, when the means of salvation which are lacking shall have been bestowed upon it by God. Here belongs, first, according to a widespread notion, the conversion of the Jewish nation. Gentile Christians, it is said, have from the first (from Paul) a spiritualistic Christianity. It is necessary to assert the realism of Scripture which designed the people of the Old Testament to be the centre of the nations, to be the ruling, organizing power for humanity; as to which the predictions of the Old Testament respecting the Holy Land, Jerusalem, Ezekiel's temple and sacrifice, are not yet fulfilled, and therefore must yet be fulfilled. And although, in modern days, less weight is placed upon these characteristics of the Old Testament, all the more is it frequently insisted that the right strength and the right success will be wanting for heathen missions until Israel is converted. But,

according to Paul, conversely, the unbelief of Israel as a nation will continue until the fulness of the heathen be brought in, and Israel can grasp with hands, so to speak, what the Christian nations already have. As a second means of salvation, a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit is expected in various ways. The degree of his outpouring hitherto experienced, it is said, no longer suffices for the needs of the present, before which the Gospel no longer proves itself, or can prove itself, the quickening and preserving salt, with the exception of individual souls, in which it still shows its energy. But the Gospel and its power is eternally young, and can never grow old. Moreover, the sin of men, although different in degree, is the same in essence, as is the character of the human heart in need of redemption. Distrust of the sufficient strength of the Gospel for the mission which the church has upon earth must cripple hope and zeal in labor for the kingdom of God—at all events, in that which is remote from all organized life of Christian communion—and limit the activity of Christian love, also, toward scattered individuals. Finally, others find the ground of all evils of the church in the want, since the death of the apostles, of an organizing divine authority for all its ordinances, especially for the employment of gifts in the right places, and consequently for the distribution of offices. Hence they find the means of preparation for Christ's parousia in the restoration of the primitive apostolate. But this is to lay, in a Catholicizing spirit, such stress on the outward form and institution of the church as is out of harmony with the material principle of faith, and denies the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, in which we possess the true continuance of the apostolate.

A common feature in all these grosser or more

refined Chiliasms is, that they regard that to which their principal interest is directed as not secured or given in Christianity hitherto, and consequently regard the Gospel as inadequately equipped for that which pertains to believers or the Church, even indeed upon earth. Consequently, in one way or another, they think too meanly of that which is already come and given with Christ's first parousia; and this is an Ebionitic or Judaistic trait. The Gnostic or Docetic eschatology is distinguished from such a view by this, that in an optimistic, idealizing spirit it prefers a conception of Christianity which makes everything depend only upon the inwardness of faith, on the presence in it of eternal life (and therefore for faith the kingdom of God is already come), but not on the position that the kingdom of God is still coming. In this case the power of sin—the antichristian element—is undervalued, and this mode of thought is especially shown in the fact that the Gnostic eschatology can find no place in its theory for the passages of Holy Scripture respecting antichristian powers. This Docetic eschatology, especially when it is based on the ideality of faith as the power which has overcome the world, certainly involves the truth, that the earthly world and history is not *merely* a preparation or time of probation, or has the essence of the supreme good only outside itself. This history and world of ours must not be thought empty of the divine. It is not too bad for eternal life to be already implanted in it. But the Docetic eschatology overlooks the truth contained in Christian hope, namely, that to the complete essence of Christianity belongs also a manifestation-side, dominion over the outward, not merely the vanquish-

ing of everything hostile, but also the positive triumphant unfolding of its import, and the realizing of the harmony between spirit and nature.

III.—*Dogmatic Investigation.*

1. In respect to the earthly history of Christianity, (even if we ignore the base secular doctrine [Diesseitigkeitslehre] of materialism) two opposite modes of thought present themselves. The one thinks the chief thing is still wanting even after Christ's manifestation, salvation being a matter first of the other world, eternal life not a present reality. This undervaluing of Christ's first manifestation, of the worth of the atonement, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, is a false doctrine of the future world (Jenseitigkeitslehre), or Ebionitic eschatology. To it approximates the Romish doctrine in relation to individuals, so far as it does not properly admit an assurance of salvation in the temporal life, but seeks to interpose a state of punishment, even for believers, before the consummation. In reference to the Church, Catholicism falls into the opposite fault,¹ because it ignores the imperfections still cleaving to the earthly Church, and proceeds as though the *ecclesia militans* stood *instar triumphantis*, which of course is only possible because it identi-

¹ Because of the professedly perfect constitution, the hierarchy, in which it sees the virtual church or its essence.

fies also the Church and the kingdom of God.¹ Conversely, faith and the inner possession of eternal life in this world may be so emphasized in a spiritualistic manner, and with indifference to the consummation of the whole, as though nothing further were needed, because in a spiritual sense "the resurrection is passed already," and the realization of Christianity in the phenomenal world is a matter of indifference." This is false teaching of a spiritualistic kind with reference to the present world. The Reformation, rejecting both of these opposite errors, against the Catholic doctrine of the future in respect to the individual, emphasizes this world and the worth of this earthly life, in virtue of the saving faith and the experience of the power of Christ's high-priestly office, which may be attained upon the earth; but still it does this in such a way as to leave an essential place for the hope of the consummation of the personality. On the other hand, as concerns the church and the kingdom of God, it does not find their perfect form already given in the actuality of the earth. Although it believes the consummating principle is embodied in Christendom, its existence veiled already in the present, still it turns in this respect chiefly to the future, and to the hope of the full unveiling of Christ's king-

¹ With a one-sided doctrine as to the future world, in respect of individuals, it unites a false doctrine of the present world in respect to the church.

² 2 Tim. ii. 18.

ship, for the consummation of individuals and the whole, in the consciousness, at the same time, of the ethical labor to be performed in behalf of the kingdom of God.

Hence the evangelical eschatology maintains the pure Christian character, since it keeps the mean between those two extremes, and, on the basis of God's kingdom having come, preserves the hope of a full coming in visible power in behalf of individuals and the whole. Out of the possession in the very midst of non-possession, which belongs to faith, is developed with eternal youth and freshness the Christian confidence that what is still lacking will become a blessed possession.

2. But how, according to Scripture, is the framework of the earthly history of the church and kingdom of God to be filled up? In relation to the dogmatic doctrine of the future phases of development, the following points come into notice—the announcement of the *apostasy* to the antichristian side, the question of the millennium, and the relation of Christ's second advent to both. The first question is: Can the greater fierceness of the conflicts, nay, an apostasy before the end, be reconciled with the position that Christianity will penetrate and influence the world, both intensively and extensively, with growing permanence and comprehensiveness? Of course an apostasy does not follow necessarily from sin taken alone.

Sin is not a power, the chief strength of which must necessarily reveal itself only at last, and which could not be already broken in principle by Christianity through faith. The opposite is proved in believers, whose sin was originally the same as that of all others. If, then, Christianity has already in its beginnings shown the strength to accomplish the hardest task—the vanquishing of sin in principle—one might think that the rest may, and must, be accomplished all the more easily. But since the process of Christian grace is and remains ethical in character, *i.e.*, since it is conditioned by human freedom, it follows directly from the growing influence of Christianity in the world, that those who nevertheless persevere in resistance will be impelled and hardened by the stronger revelation of Christ to more and more malignant, especially to more spiritual forms of wickedness, in order to hold their ground against it. In this way, then, the apostasy, supported by lying and the semblance of spiritual being, is the more seductive and contagious, and to it even outward apostasy, in increasing expansion, may attach itself in further development and revelation of the inner state. But the transition to this is formed by the inner apostasy through falsification of Christianity, which when it assumes a spiritual garb is capable of the greatest diffusion. Other higher religions look for extension by simple growth, and at least uniform victory in the

main. Christianity shows such confidence in its truth and victorious strength, that it predicts a great apostasy in reference to the very time when its influence on humanity shall have become greatest, while conscious also of being equal to the apostasy. Certain of its indestructibleness, from the first it counted on this fact. Momentary overthrow it will convert into the foil of its more glorious triumph. Have the antichristian powers of hell, with their veiled or open hate to Christianity, encroached deeply on the history of the church, and suppressed the action of its pure principle, then it will display its divine victorious strength as it never did before. But in this event it can only be found fitting that after the apostasy that counterpart of which Paul and the Apocalypse speak, also shall appear powerfully on earth, in the drama of history, so that the heavenly consummation begins its prelude on earth. Not that a new world-order must begin as concerns sin and death and offspring. But a flowering-time of the church is perhaps then to be expected, especially through the Christianizing of all nations,¹ because then humanity has again become a unity, owning one Shepherd; because then all charisms, which have been bestowed by nature on every nation, must tend to the advantage of the whole church; finally, because even the love of the old Christendom will be

¹ Matt. xxiv. 14, 34 ff. · Rom. xi. 15, 25 ff.

invigorated by the first love of the newly converted nations. This scriptural doctrine, held fast by the Christian hope of all times, commends itself also dogmatically, on the ground that by these two—the aggravated conflict and the flowering-time to follow after it—the process is marked out visibly in accordance with the laws of freedom. But with the Chiliasm of Judaism or of the Anabaptists of the age of the Reformation, with their carnal tendency and passionate, impatient eagerness for visible presentation, as well as with the doubt of the sufficiency for our actual salvation of the gifts brought by Christ's first parousia, the church has nothing to do. Nor is Christ's second advent forestalled by this preliminary flowering-time.¹

3. Only *Christ's visible second advent* will be the signal for the consummation. To it belongs without doubt a dogmatic significance, although nothing more precise can be settled respecting its time and form.

Its significance for *individuals* results from the following consideration. We have seen already in several dogmatic places how essential to Christian piety is personal living communion with Christ. This is of decisive importance for justification on the basis of Christ's intercession and substitution, for the Holy Baptism, and the Holy Supper. We need the Head, and communion with him, in order to growth and

¹ John x. 16.

consummation. Christ must stand already invisibly before the eye of faith as the living Lord and Saviour, if faith is to be living. But also for our future blessedness, we cannot dispense with seeing as he is, Him whom we see not, and yet love.¹ Even so, for the sake of his person itself it is to be desired that the time of his public appearing in glory follow upon the time of his divine-human working, which continues indeed, but is concealed because carried on through the organ of the church — as seeing him as he is follows upon the faith of his people; for it is also his loving desire to be thus seen, and by this means share his glory with them.² We cannot call it pure or spiritual Christianity where men wish to adhere merely to the Holy Spirit, or the divine nature of Christ, whereas the Holy Spirit, as we saw, leads to Christ. It is an essential trait of Christian piety not to imagine blessedness by itself outside communion with Christ. And if Christ is not merely a portion of the supreme good, but its centre, while that good must be manifested in order to the consummation of the world; so can he by no means remain invisible, but through him and his revelation in glory must the kingdom of God, which is also his kingdom, be manifested. The happy reunion with friends and kindred in the body every one wishes and hopes, and yet this is but

¹ 1 Pet. i. 8; iii. 2.

² 1 John iii. 2. John xvii. 24.

a secondary matter for the blessedness of believers, compared with the necessity of beholding Christ. Nay, the full communion with the Head must contain the security, as well as the rule and the order, for all other beholding and reunion; for we shall be mutually related in the world to come, not by the laws and ordinances of nature, but by those of the kingdom of grace and its majestic Head.

But the New Testament doctrine of Christ's second coming has, besides, significance for the Church and the kingdom of God, since through it their earthly history comes to a close. It may then be asked, indeed, why is not the leavening of humanity through the Holy Spirit in growing measure enough, although, according to what has been said, under severe conflicts, nay, catastrophes? Why is a new creative act necessary, instead of a gradual interpenetration and illumination, the result of which would be of itself, as it were, the visibility of the kingdom of God and of Christ? The answer may perhaps lie in a twofold reason. An altogether new attitude of matter and nature to the spirit is the condition of the consummation, an attitude which the spirit cannot produce out of itself, which can only be given to it, and through which the entrance of the spirit into the ruling, central position, also, for nature and the body, becomes possible.¹

¹ Comp. also Schleiermacher, *ii.*, 486.

Even as the church, humanity does not all-powerfully govern nature. But while spirit and nature are external to each other, the spirit does not yet have its perfect power and efficiency. Conversely, also, nature needs to be freed from all chaotic and perishable being,¹ in order to find its goal; even as the spirit first in the glorification of nature will have the means of completely revealing and realizing itself. Therefore must the mutually external existence of spirit and nature give way to a perfect internal existence. Their externality to each other is the ground of the mortality of the natural side, and of its being a means of temptation to the spiritual side. For in this externality the natural side has still too great independence, and exerts a determining power over the personality. Christ now so increases the energy of the spirit that nothing foreign can longer rule it, while he also unites the glorified nature with the spirit without identifying them, by the resurrection in connection with a cosmical process of world-transformation, for which his second advent is the signal. But as in this way the false mutual externality of nature and spirit is set aside by Christ's second advent, so also through it the false mutual internality of good and evil in the earthly world-period is brought to a separation. His second advent is a sign of the ripeness

¹ Rom. viii. 21 ff.

of the world for the *judgment*. The obverse of the separation of the heterogeneous is the consummation of the communion of everything homogeneous. On all these grounds, Christ's second advent is grounded in the necessity of the perfect revelation of his Love, and Power, and Justice.

SECOND PART: INTERMEDIATE STATE AND RESURRECTION.

SEC. 153.

There is a resurrection of the dead, which is not made superfluous by the intermediate state, but is realized through the Lord's second advent in order to the consummation of personality.

I.—*Biblical Doctrine.*

1. A series of passages of the New Testament can be quoted to show that believers pass by death at once into a blessed state, and into closer communion with the Lord. To the thief upon the cross Christ says: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."¹ Lazarus is carried straight to Abraham's bosom.² "I will come again," says Christ in his farewell discourses, "and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also."³ Paul knows that a crown of righteousness is laid up for him, and that he will be

¹ Luke xxiii. 43.

² Luke xvi. 22.

³ John xiv. 3.

saved in His heavenly kingdom; he longs to be at home with the Lord.¹ Revelation pronounces the dead blessed from henceforth who die in the Lord.² Passages like these preclude the notion of a sleep of the soul, and assert that believers pass through death into a better than the earthly state.³ Nevertheless it would be a mistake to conclude from the passages quoted that perfect, completed blessedness and spiritual consummation begin for believers immediately after death. Paradise indeed is certainly not Hades, but a *μουνή* for the blessed,⁴ and for this reason not the heaven which denotes the place or state of the perfected blessed. The good work begun is not completed on the day of death, but on the day of Jesus Christ.⁵ On the contrary, a series of passages imply that the chief comfort and dearest hope of Christians refer not to what they attain directly after death, but to what only becomes theirs at Christ's second advent and resurrection, to the deposit laid up for them and secure for that day.⁶ Such great stress is laid on the hope of the resurrection, that, in comparison with it, the advance to preliminary, higher stages of life

¹ Phil. i. 23. 2 Tim. iv. 8, 18.

² Rev. xiv. 13.

³ Phil. i. 21, 23.

⁴ Comp. John xiv. 2 ff. 2 Cor. xii. 4.

⁵ Phil. i. 6.

⁶ 1 Pet. v. 4. 2 Tim. i. 12; iv. 8. 1 John iii. 2. Rom. viii. 19, 23. 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. Col. iii. 4.

almost vanishes from sight.¹ An anxious longing for Christ's revelation in glory is ascribed to the departed souls of the martyrs under the altar.² An instantaneous vision of God is not promised.³ A spiritual consummation in relation to volition, feeling, knowledge, leaving nothing to be added but the physical consummation, immediately after death, cannot therefore be found in Scripture.⁴ For this reason the advance, which death no doubt brings with it for believers, by no means excludes a middle or intermediate state. This state could only be denied if, after the separation of the soul from the body, no reunion with the body and no judgment were to be expected, but if, according to Scripture, a state, admitting of no change forever, began at once with death. But that there is room for changes even in the next world, follows in reference to those who die in faith, from the doctrine of their resurrection. Still more important must be the changes possible in a middle state, in the next world, in relation to those who in this life have not become ripe for judgment.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 29 ff.

² Rev. vi. 9-11.

³ Neither in Matt. v. 8, nor in 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

⁴ When it is said the moral imperfection, which certainly still clings to believers on their departure, will be obliterated in a moment by death, which brings them the vision of God (Philippi, vi. 6-8), in opposition to this is the fact that conversely only the pure in heart, or holy, shall see God (Matt. v. 8. Heb. xii. 14).

Holy Scripture says nothing expressly about them, with the exception of the passages in the First Epistle of Peter considered before, and indeed of all those passages, according to which the Gospel must be preached to all, and God's purpose of grace applies to all.

2. The New Testament teaches not merely a spiritual resurrection, which takes place at the new birth,¹ but also a bodily one, in opposition to Sadduceeism and an idealistic philosophy.² Certainly in by far the most numerous passages merely a resurrection of the righteous is spoken of, but in some a general resurrection, without the bodily constitution of the ungodly being indicated.³ On the other hand, in the case of the pious the resurrection is thought as a union of the spirit with a glorified corporeity, and assimilation of believers with the glorified body of Christ,⁴ whose resurrection is treated as a pattern and pledge of our resurrection.⁵ The latter will take place in close

¹ Hymenæus and Philetus, 2 Tim. ii. 18, perhaps also the deniers of the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 12.

² Matt. xxii. 29-32. 1 Cor. xv. Luke xiv. 14; xx. 36. Acts xxiii. 6; xxiv. 15, 21. Heb. vi. 2. John v. 29; xi. 24, 25; vi. 44, 54.

³ John v. 28 ff. Rev. xx. 12-15. Acts xxiv. 15. 2 Cor. v. 10. Dan. xii. 2.

⁴ Rom. vi. 5. Phil. iii. 20, 21. 1 Cor. xv. 43, 49, 53. 2 Cor. v. 3-10. John vi. 39. 1 John iii. 2.

⁵ Rom. vi. 4; viii. 10, 11. Col. iii. 4.

association with cosmical processes.¹ The spirit which survives death and corruption, and is in unity with God's Spirit, is conceived as co-operative therein, as putting on the mortal, in order to transform it into an immortal mode of being, the dead body being also compared to a seed-corn.²

II.—*Church Doctrine.*

(*Symb. Apost.*, *Conf. Aug.*, xvii. ; *Cat. Maj.*, 471, 501.)

1. It has been shown previously (see Appendix, p. 147) that many of the earliest church teachers taught a preaching of the Gospel, as well as the possibility of conversion, in Hades. But the Catholic Church, especially after the days of Augustine and Gregory the Great, not merely assumed in general an intermediate time and state between death and the resurrection at Christ's second coming, but more and more let all stress fall upon this life to such an extent that the definitive fate of every one was to be decided at death, and those dying without faith in Christ should be lost, although transferred to different places of punishment. Those dying in faith, on the other hand, were all to be saved; but only those already holy should enter at once into blessedness; while Christians in general, on the contrary, must suffer still in purgatory

¹ Rom. viii. 21. 1 Thess iv. 14-17. 1 Cor. xv. 51 ff. 2 Pet. iii. 3, 10, 13. Rev. xxi. 1.

² 1 Cor. xv. 53, 56-58. Rom. viii. 10, 11.

the temporal penalties for their sins, and through the pain of the *ignis purgatorius* sin in them is to be annihilated, so that they may be able to enter upon blessedness. The Reformation rejected utterly the whole doctrine of purgatory, and discovered in it a perversion of the Gospel, nay, the seat of a multitude of the worst corruptions of the church. It expected the near end of the world, and was, therefore, all the less inclined to busy itself much about the condition of the soul between death and the resurrection. This remained, at first, its general presupposition : with the end of the earthly life is for all men the definitive decision given, without any intermediate state. Upon the other side there is only the opposition between heaven and hell ; Hades is identical with Gehenna. Yet degrees of happiness and of misery were supposed among the blessed and the lost, nay, with the resurrection and the judgment an enhancement also of the condition of both was supposed. According to some passages in Luther,¹ sin will only be utterly destroyed in us with the resurrection ; while others, as Gerhard² think that in the moment of death orig-

¹ Cat. Maj., p. 500: Spiritus S. citra intermissionem nobis sanctificandis opus suum perficit usque in extremum diem. Comp. 500-59.

² This is also held by moderns, as Rinck, Splittgerber, Philippi, vi. 8. Beholding God purifies the soul at once. Philippi supposes, besides, a creative, miraculous act of God, which always coincides with the death of the believer.

inal sin is annihilated.¹ Many teachers of the ancient church, as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Jerome, suppose a complete identity of the resurrection-body with the earthly one, all the faults of the latter included, which Christ will remedy at his second coming. A more spiritual theory is maintained, especially by Origen with his school, who even regards the present body as an evil and a hindrance to perfection. But especially since Augustine's day a middle opinion between the materialistic and the spiritualistic has prevailed, which also has passed over into the evangelical church. According to this view the resurrection-body has indeed an identity of substance with the earthly body, but not of form, for that rather will be a glorified body.

III.—*Dogmatic Exposition.*

Death and Resurrection in General.—Death, as the separation of the soul from the body, which falls a prey to corruption, is represented in the whole of Scripture as something that does not belong to the idea of man, but has interposed itself, as a disturbance of the godlike personality through sin, and in so far contrary to nature.² Hence as surely as redemption involves a restoration, nay, consummation of all good, through it the original bond of union between soul and

¹ Comp. above, secs. 87, 88.

² Comp. above, 1 secs. 87, 88.

body is restored ; nay, made more intimate, and it cannot remain indifferent to the rupture of this bond. Death is, indeed, to Christians, no more death in the ordinary sense ; it is no longer penal evil. The Christian is free from the sting—the fear of death and Hades. Nay, to Christians death is no longer a mere suffering, but an entering into the divine will, thus an act ; hence the “form of death” is the only remnant of death. And yet it is in itself no good even for Christians.¹ Fear of it vanishes for the Christian, in the main, only through the certainty that it is a transition, however painful and violent, to a metamorphosis, to a better life that can die no more.² This existence is therefore higher than that of man before the Fall. The New Testament is not contented with a bodiless immortality. It is opposed to a naked spiritualism, and accords completely with a deeper philosophy, which discerns in the body not merely the sheath or garment of the soul, but a side of the person belonging to his full idea, his mirror and organ, of the greatest importance for his activity and history. The human body too has its peculiar dignity, being raised even during earthly life by the Holy Spirit to a higher stage, into a temple of God.³ But something still higher can come out of matter than has come out of it in the earthly body.⁴

¹ 2 Cor. v. 2-4: “I desire to be clothed upon, rather than unclothed.”

² John xi. 25, 26.

³ 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv.

For even the body is to be renewed after the image of God, which is implied in the statement that it is to be made like Christ's glorified body. Therefore not only will death keep no prey, but the *δόξα* of the divine life is to shine forth from it. Here also the New Testament favors Realism, in such a form indeed that stress is not laid on gross matter, but on the element of substantial reality, which will be in harmony with the spirit in its consummation. For this reason it speaks of a new world, a new heaven and new earth, and finds the triumph of restorative redemption only in the pneumatic body of the resurrection, which both vanquishes everything deadly, and also glorifies earthly matter. But in the New Testament the resurrection is mentioned only in connection with Christ's second advent. And thus, before we enter more closely into the dogmatic doctrine of the resurrection, the question cannot be avoided, How is the intermediate period up to the second advent to be viewed in relation to the departed?

2. There is an INTERMEDIATE STATE before the decision by the judgment. The Reformation, occupied chiefly with opposition to the Romish purgatory, leaped over, as it were, the intermediate state, *i.e.*, left at rest the questions presenting themselves here, and gazed with unblenched eye only at the contrast between the saved and damned, retaining without further inquiry (in opposition to earlier teachers), the



view that every one's eternal lot is finally decided with his departure from the present life. This is in keeping with the high estimation put on the moral worth of the earthly life. Nevertheless this view is impracticable, and that even on moral grounds. Not only would nothing of essential importance remain for the judgment, if every one entered the place of his eternal destiny directly after death; but in that case, also, no room would be left for a progress of believers, who, however, are not yet sinless at the moment of death. If they are conceived as holy directly after death, sanctification would be effected by the separation from the body; the seat, therefore, of evil must be found in the body, and sanctification would be realized through a mere suffering, namely, of death in a physical process, instead of through the will.¹ Moreover, the

¹ To suppose, with Delitzsch, that after the body is laid aside, the sanctifying power of faith will spontaneously burst forth, and the sight of the reality of what is believed will suddenly wipe out all sin, is to reduce the matter to a mere physical process. Philippi sees that all solutions of this nature proceed on the supposition that sin has not its seat in the spirit, and therefore requires a divine creative act in behalf of every one dying in faith. But he cannot quote Holy Scripture in favor of such a view. It would imply an abridging of the ethical sphere and its laws, a violation of the fundamental law obtaining in the relation between divine and human agency, namely, that God's act initiates action. Hence Kahnis and Martensen rightly hold a continuance of the ethical process in the next world (Martensen, sec. 276; Kahnis, iii, 554, 576).

absoluteness of Christianity demands that no one be judged before Christianity has been made accessible and brought near to him. But that is not the case in this life with millions of human beings. Nay, even within the church there are periods and circles where the Gospel does not really approach men as that which it is. Moreover, those dying in childhood have not been able to decide personally for Christianity. Nor is the former view tenable exegetically. As to the Old Testament, it does not teach that all men enter directly after death into blessedness or damnation. They rather enter Sheol, which is described as an abode of the departed who are without power and true life.¹ The pious and godless are not thought of as separated therein. This agrees with the statement that Christ first prepared the place of blessedness, to which belonged his person and work.²

Further, we may apply here what was said above respecting the descent into Hades³ which implies that a salvation through knowledge of the Gospel is possible also to the departed. Christian grace is designed

¹See Appendix. Job xxxviii. 17. Gen. xxxvii. 35; xlii. 38; xlii. 29, 31. Num. xvi. 30-33. Ps. xvi. 9, 10; xviii. 5; xlix. 14 ff.; lxxxviii. 11; lxxxix. 48.

²John xiv. 3.

³Sec. 124. This section is of so much importance, especially from an exegetical point of view, that I have added it in an appendix.—TR.

for human beings, not for inhabitants of earth.¹ It is not said : He that hears not shall be damned ; but he that believes not.² Jesus seeks the lost : lost may be sought also in the kingdom of the dead. The opposite view leads to an absolute decree of rejection for all who have died and die as heathen, whereas Christian grace is universal. A proof that, according to the New Testament, the time of grace does not by a universal law expire with death, is found in Christ's raisings of the dead, *e.g.*, the youth at Nain received by being raised from the dead a prolonged term of grace, through which Christ's love became first known to him.³ And if Tyre and Sidon had seen what the Jews

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 4-6. Luke xix. 10. 1 John ii. 2.

² Mark xvi. 16.

³ Luke vii. 11-15. [Dorner's main argument is that the final determination of character, which is an ethical process, cannot be dependent upon any physical process like the change of death. But to this a New England theologian might reply : Death may be by a divine appointment, or law of God's government, the end for man of his period of grace. This cannot necessarily be, Dorner intimates above, because no such law of God's government holds true of certain cases in the New Testament. This thought is worthy of serious consideration. It may be further developed as follows : If it is a law of God's government that judgment follows death ; then, in the case of Lazarus, after which death, the first or the second, was the judgment appointed for him ? If the law held good immediately after he died the first time, then his intermediate life between his two deaths must have escaped altogether the judgment for the deeds done in the body. Thus, in our undeveloped theology upon this subject, the whole interme-

saw, and had repented in sackcloth and ashes,¹ they would have been saved; which therefore involves that if the term of grace expired for them with death, they would be damned, because, through no fault of their own, they had not seen and experienced Christ. When, further, Christ says of one sin² that it is forgiven neither in this nor the next life, whereas other sins find forgiveness without restriction to this life, there is involved a testimony that other sins aside from the sin against the Holy Ghost may yet be forgiven in the next world. And how can the *place* of itself be expected to settle the question of moral worth and capacity for redemption? When the Epistle to the

¹ Matt. xi. 21-24.

² Matt. xii. 32.

intermediate life is virtually regarded as a side-piece of the soul's existence, of which no account seems to be taken in the judgment for the deeds done *only* in the body—as the text is generally read with the addition of the word *only* to the Scripture. That would be morally possible, however, only upon the supposition that the intermediate state is a sleep of the soul. Otherwise there would be continued activities, and developments both of sin and of holiness, which would be ignored in the final judgment of an Omniscient God, which is ethically inconceivable.

Let us examine, then, the other side of the alternative. The probation of Lazarus, we will suppose, was not closed, under a divine law, by death; but continued until he died a second time. Upon this supposition his judgment after his second death must be either an instance of the general law of the last judgment, and in harmony with the relation that death has to God's government; or else it must have been a miraculous exception. But if an exception, it would be an exception not to a physical law, but to a

Hebrews says: "It is appointed to man once to die, and after this there awaits him *κρίσις*,"¹ we are not to understand with the old theology that the eternal salvation or woe of every one is decided immediately after death. As to the time of the final judgment, after death, the passage says nothing. Moreover, not only is the last judgment a crisis,² but death also

moral law. It would be an instance where the general moral principle of the judgment, which is conceived to be necessarily, or by divine decree, connected with death, does not obtain. It would be an ethical exception, a miracle in the sphere of the moral appointments of God's government. But to suppose a miracle in the sphere of moral law would be in the last degree confusing, and destructive of all faith. The distinguishing mark of Jesus' miracles was their conformity to moral laws. The supposition of a miraculous exception in the sphere of moral principles—an ethical miracle—would not confirm faith, but shake the whole foundation of belief in truth and God. An ethical miracle, in short, is ethically inconceivable, for it is not only contrary to experience, but contrary to conscience.

Our conception, therefore, of death, and its relations to the last judgment, must be comprehensive enough to include these biblical facts. No doctrine of theology can be regarded as complete and satisfactory until it does bring under one comprehensive ethical principle all the known facts and elements of belief contained in the Scriptures and in faith —Tr.]

¹ Heb ix. 27. It is not called *ἡ κρίσις*.

² The last judgment usually has the definite article. [I notice the statement in a recent lecture that any one who has looked into Dörner knows that he makes probation continue up to the day of judgment. It is possible that one who has only looked into Dörner may thus miss his main thought; but any one who

brings one in its own way. Of course the importance of the bodily life and the account to be given of it are taught in the New Testament. The passages quoted above, according to which the pious enter at once a better place, exclude a purgatory as a state of punishment or penance, but by no means exclude a growth in perfection and blessedness. Even the departed righteous are not entirely perfected before the resurrection, but their souls must still long for the dominion of Christ and the consummation of the kingdom of God.¹ Thus there is yet a *status intermedius* even for believers, and not an immediate passage into perfect blessedness, whereby the value of the resurrection would be lost, which occurs only along with Christ's second advent.

3. And now how is this intermediate state to be conceived? Before the resurrection all departed souls are in a bodiless, unclothed state,² at least without the resurrection body, as without the earthly; and so far they are all in a state not completely answering to the idea of man, to which also belongs

has studied Dorner knows that he does not use the terms judgment and the day of judgment as identical terms. The judgment, or crisis, is for every one the definitive sin of unbelief; the end of probation is ethical self-determination against God in Christ. The end of the present world-period of grace is the last judgment. All men shall have become ripe for judgment at the coming of the day of judgment.—TR.]

¹ Heb. xii. 22-24. Rev. vi. 9-11.

² Comp. 2 Cor. v. 2 ff.

corporeity. But they are not, therefore, all in the same state or realm—a view which must follow from the theory of a sleep of the soul. As for the pious, intercourse with the ungodly, to which they were subject on earth, ceases after death; they suffer nothing more from them, not even temptation.¹ The connection of believers with Christ is so intimate that death and Hades have no power over it.² On the contrary, death brings them an increase of freedom from temptations and disturbances, as well as of blessedness. For believers there is no more punishment, but there is growth, a further laying aside of defects, an invigoration through the greater nearness of the Lord which they may experience, and through the more lively hope of their consummation. But those not as yet believers, so far as they are not incorrigible, remain at first under training which aims at decision for Christ.³ But here a difficulty arises. The necessity of the resurrection is grounded in an essential, not accidental, relation of corporeity to the person, who, without body, cannot be conceived as self-conscious, and externally active. But in that case a corporeity seems necessarily demanded for the intermediate state, unless the souls of the pious are to be placed in an inferior state, or to fall into soul-sleep. But, on the other hand, to assume a spiritual body for the soul directly after death seems a forestalling of the

¹ Luke xvi. 26.² Rom. viii. 35–39.³ 1 Pet. iv. 6.

resurrection. And no less to conceive of man after death without corporeity, and yet in higher blessedness, would leave it obscure how far the resurrection is a necessity to him. We must refrain from laying down anything definite on this point. Most probable seems the conjecture, that, with this, at all events, relatively bodiless state, a still life begins, a sinking of the soul within itself and into the ground of its life—what Steffens calls Involution, and Martensen Self-brooding.¹ The life there is predominantly a life in spirituality. The essential, substantial union of the soul with Christ continues, nay, is more untroubled and constant. Through God they are able to know about the world, and learn then to view everything in connection with Christ. In this life the realities of the sensuous world are the objects of sight, the spiritual world is the object of faith. Then, when the physical side is wanting to the spirit, these poles will be reversed.² To the departed spirits the spiritual world whether in good or evil,³ will appear to be the real existence resting on

¹ Martensen, *see* 275 ff.

² Comp. Kern : Tüb. Zeitschrift Die Christliche Eschatologie, 1840.

³ Which does not imply that all the departed do, or can, immediately after death, behold everything spiritual, *e.g.*, God. If they had at once perfect knowledge, it would be inconsistent with the fact that even in the next world a free process has its place, which is not predetermined by a perfect knowledge.

immediate evidence. Since, then, such internal soul-life unveils the ground of the soul more openly, the retiring into self has for believers the effect of purifying and educating. It serves to obliterate all stains, to harmonize the whole inner being, in keeping with the good disposition brought over from the other life or later acquired ; thus there will be for them no idle waiting for the judgment but a progressing in knowledge, blessedness, and holiness, in communion with Christ and the heavenly company.

But in regard to those who died unbelieving, or not yet believing, to them also the ground of their souls is laid bare ; hence also their impurity, their discord, and alienation from God, is unveiled. This must become conscious discord in themselves. If they were subject to evil inclinations and passions, they will busy themselves with the corresponding objects of desire, and yet have their longing unappeased, and will be given over in a sense to their thoughts and desires as tormentors. If, instead of repenting and being converted, instead of growing in self-knowledge and knowledge of God as holy, and yet gracious in Christ, they prefer to continue in evil ; then the form of their sin becomes more spiritual, more demoniacal, in accordance with their state from which this world recedes farther and farther, and thus it ripens for the judgment. But in nowise will the divine government be to blame for this result. The Gospel will be deci-

sively presented to all who had not come to a final decision in this life, and all who do not shut themselves against it will be saved. If, then, in this life the sensuous alone was the object of sight, and in so far the bodily life preponderated; if, again, in the intermediate state the spiritual, whether in good or evil, preponderated, and in both cases, therefore, the equilibrium and blessed interpenetration of both sides was wanting, although there is a progression of believers in the intermediate state; the resurrection, on the other hand, consummates the personality of believers. Even their appearance becomes spiritual, pneumatic, and the spiritual becomes apparent, so that it is no longer possible to say which of the two is actual, since rather both sides interpenetrate perfectly and indissolubly.¹

Observation.—Certainly the possibility is conceivable, that in the intermediate state the soul has the power, at least in reference to particular acts, to appropriate to itself elements out of nature for purposes of self-revelation, but the forming of a permanent new body and its indissoluble union with the soul are reserved, according to the New Testament, for the resurrection.²

¹ Comp. Kern, *ut supra*.

² The passage, 2 Cor. v. 3, *ἐγχε—ὁ γυμνοὶ ἐδρεθησόμεθα*. says: We long to be clothed upon with the heavenly body (verses 1, 2), although after putting off the earthly body (*ἐκδυσόμενοι*) we shall not be found naked. If we may so read and understand the passage

4. The nature of the physical consummation, or of the resurrection-body, its absolute identity in matter and form with the earthly frame, is not included in the idea of the restoration of the entire person to corporeity. Even the seed-corn, which dies, does not all rise again in the wheat. Certain parts succumb to the elements, and enter new combinations, other new parts are assimilated. Even our body changes its material substance during its life, as Origen early perceived. Without prejudice to its identity, it undergoes daily change of substance. The identity will rather refer, *first*, to the plastic form, which for the earthly body had its moulding principle in the soul. That principle could effect nothing permanent in the intermediate state, but with the spiritual consummation of the soul it attains the full power which can

(which certainly is disputed), then some sort of an intermediate corporeity, having secondary importance in comparison with the divinely given resurrection-body, may be thought of. For, with Philippi (vi., p. 35) after Calvin, to refer the covering of the nakedness to the garment of Christ's righteousness is out of place, because the context requires, not a moral, but physical covering. For the rest, Holy Scripture says nothing of a body which is the product of the ethical process in this life, or the germ of the resurrection-body. This theory may easily lead to the notion that only the regenerate rise again. Were we to say, with Rothe, that even the abnormal moral process produces such a body, at least those who die in childhood, in whose case there can be no question of a moral process, have not acquired such a body.

appropriate to itself the heavenly body. For the building of an immortal body there is needed a power other than that possessed by the soul immediately after death, likewise a constitution of the elements different from the earthly. According to Holy Scripture the resurrection is accompanied by vast cosmical processes, with a transformation of the world¹ which will be God's work. As to form, the resurrection-body will correspond to the fact that man was created for Christ, and therefore in his consummation will become like the image of him who is our elder-born brother.²

Secondly.—As concerns matter, the elements, into which everything bodily of earth is dissolved, are an essentially uniform mass, like an ocean, and it is indifferently what parts of this are assigned to each indi-

¹ Rom. viii. 18 ff. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. xx. 11 ff. Then, to use Rothe's expression, chemistry will through God celebrate its triumphs. [This remark is worthy of special notice as indicative of one of the most significant tendencies of modern theology; that is, to contemplate Christianity—all its facts and doctrines—so far as we may, in their relation to the cosmos—to the universe at large, considered as one system or orderly development of the divine wisdom and love. Thus, the Incarnation is conceived as having universal significance for the creation. This conception is needed in New England to correct and to complete the individualism, not to say atomism, of prevalent theological modes. Without it, the doctrine of the last judgment becomes practically lost, and the necessity for the resurrection fades from view.—TR.]

² Phil. iii. 21. 1 John iii. 2. Comp. p. 90.

vidual man. The whole world of substance which makes the constant change of substance possible, is made over to humanity as a common possession. Thus, it may be said, not indeed of the individual, but of humanity, that it will appropriate or put on, in glorified form, out of the same world of elements which served it in the present life, that which corresponds to its resurrection-life, because the perishableness of matter will be abolished by its glorification. Being appropriated by spirit that has reached its permanent state, it, too, will share in this permanence.

Observation.—The passage, John v. 29, speaks not only of a resurrection of life in a glorified body of light, but also expressly of a resurrection of condemnation. If, then, we are also to suppose somehow an equalizing of the internal and external in relation to the wicked, yet the New Testament gives no more definite information on this point, but speaks almost exclusively of the resurrection of the just. The other is not so much a matter of theological knowledge as of curiosity.

THIRD PART.—THE LAST JUDGMENT AND THE END OF
THE WORLD.

SEC. 154.

There is a final judgment by the returning Lord, of which the negative side is the exclusion of all evil from the kingdom of Christ and its blessedness; the

positive, the revelation of the full power of redemption through the consummation of the individual and of the world.

1. All judgments in and through the history of the world are only partial ; but they are, besides, ambiguous, and not finally decisive of anything. If this alternate victory and defeat of the good continued forever, not only would the subjective æsthetic and religious feeling be wronged, but the ultimate goal would totter. The result would be a Dualism which would set up good and evil as equal in might and worth, threatening thus to co-ordinate the two, which is not compatible with the teleological character of Christianity and the decisive significance of Christ's person. Christianity cannot always remain a mere historic principle *alongside* the absolutely contrary principle, and share the power with it as though both had equal right. The kingdom of God must outlive all, must show up everything hostile as altogether worthless, or as hollow, untrue, and powerless. We are driven to demand this not only by an æsthetic interest, which, even of itself, requires a harmonious close of the world-drama ; but by a religious and moral interest in keeping with the connection obtaining between the moral and the physical, *i.e.*, the might. Christianity claims to be the reality of realities, alone possessed of true eternal power. But what it is in itself, or internally, this it must also reveal. As spirit-

ual it cannot remain a mere quiescent power. It is the inmost ground-thought of the world, so that without its victory the design of the world would be unattained.

2. Hence the New Testament teaches a last judgment, and through it a *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, an end of the course of this world; which is not annihilation of the world,¹ but a reaching of its final goal.² The descriptions of the final judgment contain figurative elements.³ But this is simply the form of the thought, that at the end of the present world-course the moment arrives when, by divine intervention, a permanent division is effected, when the powers hostile to the kingdom of God are stripped of their usurped might, revealed in their falsehood and impotence, and consigned to the past; when evil is utterly cut off, given over to its nothingness or made a harmless subordinate element. God executes the judgment through Christ. The absolute revelation must also be that which judges. The Son of man

¹ The older theologians, from Gerhard to Hollar, would find an *abolitio substantiæ et formæ mundi* in Matt. xxiv. 35, Heb. i. 11, Rev. xx. 11. But other passages oppose this, as 1 Cor. vii. 31 [τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου—παράγει]; Rom. viii. 19, 21. Nor does it agree with the fact that the substance of the world is good and plastic. Comp. Philippi vi. 143-148.

² The *συντέλεια αἰῶνος* is called *ἡμετέρας*, Matt. xiii. 39, 40 ff., 49; xxiv. 3.

³ E.g., Matt. xxv. 31 ff.

is, as the truth of humanity, also its absolute norm, and the standard according to which righteous judgment is passed on men.¹ Hence, whoever continues in opposition to him is self-condemned.² There can be no doubt, from the New Testament, that every one whom the judgment finds disbelieving will be condemned to punishment and pain, while believers enter into eternal life. But whether many or few, in proportion to the total number of men, will be brought by this judgment into perfect blessedness, and whether many or few are subjected to punishment; on this we have no certain disclosure. When Christ was questioned about it,³ he treated the question as one which we are not to entertain, but should ask instead whether we have done our part to enter by the narrow way. It is thus designated as a premature question of curiosity. But another question is, whether, if any have fallen under a condemnatory judgment, they will be eternally damned. In regard to this we have a twofold series of Scripture passages.

On the one hand, it is said,⁴ the sin against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven even in the next

¹ John v. 27.

² John iii. 19. In the same sense believers too are to be co-judges (1 Cor. vi. 2, Luke xxii. 30) in proportion as they are like the Son of man.

³ Luke xiii. 23.

⁴ Matt. xii. 32.

world, which seems to imply that if committed by any one, it deprives of blessedness forever, and brings in its train either destruction and annihilation, or eternal damnation. For the sin against the Holy Ghost is final unbelief, which absolutely demands punishment, and for which no further sacrifice exists and no intercession must be made.¹ The unsaved fall a prey to unquenchable eternal fire, to the worm which dies not.² According to Revelation, the smoke of the torment of those cast into the burning lake ascends from æons to æons.³ But the strongest passage on this side is the saying respecting the betrayer: "It were better for that man if he had never been born."⁴

On the other hand, there is undeniably much that is figurative in passages of this kind, and thus the question arises, how far the interpretation should be literal. Again, a destruction of death and Hades is spoken of.⁵ Paul calls death the last foe who is overcome, therefore sin has been overcome before. Since, further, with him death denotes also spiritual death,

¹ Heb. vi. 4; x. 26, 27. 1 John v. 16. John xvii. 9.

² Mark ix. 42-48. Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 41-46; iii. 10; vii. 19.

³ Rev. xix. 3; xiv. 11; xx. 10.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 24. The supposition of an annihilation by punishment would be more compatible with this passage than that of universal restoration.

⁵ Hos. xiii. 14. Isa. xxv. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 26; comp. vers. 54, 55. Rev. xx. 14.

the cause of which is sin, it seems as if the destruction of death implied the ceasing of sin, either through conversion of the wicked or through their destruction. Revelation makes death and Hades, nay, even the devil, to be cast into the burning lake,¹ which denotes the second death. The meaning of the "second death" has in any case something mysterious about it. If the first death is the dissolution of the body, the second might signify a dissolution of the soul, or at least the hardening and dying of the soul to divine things through entire separation from the holy God, and therefore a state of spiritual ruin. Further, the passages concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost say nothing of definite persons who have committed this sin. Of themselves, therefore, they leave the question unanswered, what men, and whether any men, reach this final goal of depravity, which is set before the eyes as a warning. Just so the revelation of John does not say who, or that any man, will be cast into the lake of fire; the hypothetical form is rather chosen: "If one is not written in the book of life," "if one worships the beast," he shall drink the cup of wrath,"—all which affirms nothing of persons, but of the principle. Moreover, in the strongest passages the word *αἰών*, *αἰώνιος* is often used, which, in the nature of the case, in reference

¹ Rev. xx. 14; comp. ver. 10.

² Rev. xx. 15; xiv. 9, *et seq.*

to the blessedness or eternal life of believers, signifies eternal duration, but by no means denotes everywhere an endless period, for an end of the æons is spoken of. Æons and æons of æons also often denote the world-age.¹ Were this meaning to be assumed in reference to the punishments, the result would be indeed a duration of immeasurable length, but not an eternity of duration, a view which may be that favored also by the passage which makes the punishment endure until the last farthing is paid.²

Here belong several other passages which land the universality of grace and its all embracing power.³ Paul looks forward to a time when everything shall be subject to the Son, that God may be all in all.⁴ According to him Christ reconciles everything to

¹ Heb. ix. 26. Comp. Burnet, *ut supra*, p. 318 ff. Circumcision is to be an eternal usage, Gen. xvii. 13; Canaan an eternal possession of Israel, Gen. xiii. 15; xlviii. 4. The Mosaic laws in reference to the Passover, and many commands of a transient nature, are called an ordinance for eternity (על־עלְמֵי), e.g., Ex. xii. 14; xxvii. 21; xxviii. 43. Lev. x. 15; xvi. 34. Num. xviii. 11. The temple at Jerusalem is to be God's dwelling forever, 2 Chron. vi. 2. Just so the kingdom of David is to be forever, 2 Sam. vii. 13. A slave, who spontaneously binds himself by a symbolical act to his lord, is said, according to Ex. xxi. 6, to serve him forever. That *aión* corresponds to עֶלְמֵי is shown by the Septuagint and the New Testament.

² Matt. v. 26. Penal sufferings may be requisite to deliverance.

³ Rom. v. 18; xi. 26, 32. Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 16, 20.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 25-28.

himself, whether on earth or in heaven. He makes all things to be gathered together in Christ, both that which is in heaven and on earth.¹ And if also, according to the principal passage respecting the sin against the Holy Ghost, there is no forgiveness for it ;² there is involved in this, indeed, the necessity of punishment for those guilty of that sin. But that does not necessarily exclude deliverance through punishment and its just execution.³

3. On the ground of the second series of statements, the doctrine of universal restoration (*ἀποκατάστασις πάντων*) has again and again found its friends, from Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, John Scotus Erigena, down to Petersen (about 1700), Michael Hahn, Oetinger, also, from some hints, Bengel, but especially Schleiermacher ; while others, instead of a universal conversion suppose, although by a process of long-continued punishments, the annihilation of the wicked, either through punishment or because the regenerate alone are immortal. Paul assumes, to be sure, in the passages quoted, that no hostile power, thus neither death nor sin, will assert itself against Christ ; but these passages affirm with certainty only the final impotence of the wicked, and even the saying that God will be all in all, which is

¹ Col. i. 20. Eph. i. 10. Comp. John x. 16.

² Matt. xii. 31 ff.

³ Matt. v. 26.

not to be understood pantheistically, does not necessarily assert universal salvation and glorification, but may imply that God will be the controlling power in all, according to the character of each—either as just toward the wicked, who will have lost their freedom, or as gracious. In any case, they can but serve the kingdom of God, not assert any power against it. On the other hand, it is to be conceded that there is no dogmatic interest in demanding that some are of a certainty eternally damned and lost. For that would imply not only that the possibility of eternal sin is contained in the ethical world-idea of God; but that a real, eternal dualism belongs to the Christian world-goal; which is to be rejected. But the friends of apokatastasis are not satisfied with this, and maintain even the *dogmatic* necessity of their view.

4. Criticism of the dogmatic reasons for a restoration of all things.

Firstly.—The equality of human sin and need of redemption may be alleged in favor of this view. "If all men are by nature involved in essentially the same sinfulness, from which redemption alone can deliver, then, if all are not delivered, the reason would be that Christian grace did not operate in all with equal success. But since it is meant to apply equally to all, such a contrary result could not have its ground in God; and likewise, if all are not redeemed, sin could not be by nature an equal power in

all; rather in some it would be conquerable by God, in others unconquerable, which is against the hypothesis." But this argument loses its weight if the final destiny is, as by us, made dependent not on natural sinfulness, but on the use of freedom, which has been restored in all, in deciding for or against Christ. In the universal call, external and internal, is given universal possibility of faith; but to produce by God's power impossibility of disbelief would directly contradict the ethical character of the world-goal.

"The divine justice," it may be further urged, "is not satisfied if a number of men eternally suffer punishment against their will; its full triumph is secured only when the sinner's own consciousness of guilt is constrained to acknowledge the justice of the punishment, and this of itself paves the way for a turning to the truth and to amendment." Still, justice does not become more just by being acknowledged, and non-acknowledgment ought not to hinder its revelation, but makes it all the more necessary. We have no right to say that punishment is just only if it is the means of amendment. Justice of itself does not need the happiness or improvement of all.¹—Universal salvation might rather be deduced from divine love. But love maintains its sacred, inviolable character, in that justice guards it against despoil. Love

¹ Above, sec. 88, p. 229.

may not throw itself away. Those who despise the love of Christ, who desecrate his sacrifice, cannot with such conduct be the objects of divine love. That cannot force itself on any one and undervalue its own work. If the despisers of Christ's love could be well-pleasing to God, love would declare its own work superfluous. For those who have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost (and only such, as must be conceded, can be objects of eternal damnation) there can be in God no love, because, and in so far as, they have identified themselves indissolubly with evil. But are not the redeeming power and victory of Christ incomplete, if enemies exist forever who are only externally, not internally, vanquished, *i.e.*, who are only powerless, but still of evil disposition? "Christ's redemptive purpose indisputably embraces all; thus his wish also would be unfulfilled unless all became partakers of salvation." Christ's intercession cannot imply the imparting of redemption to those who would not accept it by their own free decision. The Gospel can subdue only by spiritual means. If the free will decides to reject the Gospel, Christ cannot hinder it, or desire to supersede the spiritual process by mere power.¹

¹ It is more difficult to refute the objection, how it consists with the love of God, who eternally foresees also free actions, to create those, of whom he knows beforehand that they are created for eternal damnation. But whether the divine foreknowledge should

But if, starting from the idea of the *church*, we say as follows: "None can be wanting to it in the consummation, who belong to its idea; but according to the New Testament everything is created for Christ, therefore all belong to the divine idea of the church, and thus a universal apokatastasis is required from its standpoint; or, granting that some one had never belonged to the idea of the church at all, he would not be regarded even by God as belonging to our class of beings, but to another, and this would be Manichæan;"—the answer is contained in what precedes. God's unexhausted, undiminished creative power and wisdom will know how to provide in the progress of the generations against the possibility that the idea of the church and the kingdom of God will remain unrealized, either by means of new individuals or by giving to the faithful the talent of the unfaithful for the work. Power, therefore, is not conferred on sin to frustrate the thought of the consummation of the kingdom. That unbelievers are not by nature essentially different from believers, that they did not belong originally to another class of beings having no

be so viewed that it could become a motive for non-creation, is more than questionable. The foreknowledge of final unbelief presupposes the creation of those who become unbelieving. Comp. vol. ii., p. 61, and M'Cabe, *The Foreknowledge of God*, 1878. But the question remains: Is conservation for eternal torment conceivable?

reference to Christ, is evident from the fact that final unbelief is possible in their case only through an abuse of freedom, which they might have avoided. The Gospel had a positive relation to them also, but by their abuse of freedom they made this relation a negative one. Even believers are not saved by a particular predestination, but they did not abuse the freedom which the others also had ; not that this is a merit in them, but it furnished to grace the possibility of influence and self-communication.¹

Observation.—But of course it must be conceded that the human race is a genus of beings, the members of which are able through their freedom to fall apart into opposite poles, which are of absolute significance, deeper than any antithesis possible among the different genera of beings in nature. But such depth of separation is possible only on the basis of freedom and original equality. Freedom is the power to sunder spirits into the *absolute* contrast of children of light and children of darkness, and to convert the latter into a class of beings which is, of course, absolutely opposed to the other. But God did not create men on a dualistic basis.

But do not the *certitude* and *power of baptism* suffer unless all are saved ? In baptism surely God confers on man election and his faithful covenant, which does not apply merely to the moment. If, then, a baptized one is lost, the certainty of the election testified by baptism is gone. But certain as it is that election to the offer of grace by outward

¹ Sec. 151, p. 410.

and inward calling is universal and absolute, still the election to life embraces only believers and the regenerate, and withal has regard to the use of freedom.

Most of all it may seem established that the *happiness of believers* must necessarily be *disturbed* by the misery of the one class, especially since the former have the consciousness of not being better or more worthy, but, on the contrary, of even having contributed to the sin of others by joint responsibility. Thus a sting seems necessarily left in the happiness of the good, unless all are saved. In reply to this it might indeed be said: If the damnation of some is God's holy and righteous will, a resignation is fitting, in which no other wish is felt than one in harmony with God's will, whose love surely is not surpassed by our loving sympathy.—But this answer is insufficient, because mere [*i.e.*, passive, Tr.] resignation would not comport with the perfecting of personality. On the other hand, in respect to the sting lying in the consciousness of joint authorship of sin, it must be considered that *the* sin which leads to damnation can never be the sin resulting from innate sinfulness alone, or at all from the influence of the race, the common spirit, example, or temptation by error. Rather the sin rendering the individual absolutely bad can only be the personal guilt of rejecting Christ, in which, of course, rejection of good itself is included, and therefore acquiescence in all other possible sin. And if further it is remembered that only blasphemy against the Holy Ghost can be the final ground of damnation, and therefore the sin that tramples under foot the blood of the new covenant and counts it unholy; sympathy with such sinners must be essentially different from natural

sympathy with members of the race; for they of course belong to an absolutely different class of beings, for whom even intercession can no longer be made, because it is ethically as well as logically impossible to desire forgiveness for those who despise it. Provision must, indeed, be made somehow, so that the dualism of powers hostile to God be not perpetuated, instead of the consummation of our sphere of creation.

5. Clear as is the utterance of the New Testament on the *principle* that unbelief damns, not at all clear is its answer to the question what *persons* are judged and treated on that principle.¹ That some are damned

[¹ In an article upon Dorner's theology in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for October, 1882, this statement of Dorner's views is given: "Thus in regard to the endless duration of future punishment, he concedes that the Scriptural evidence in the affirmative preponderates," etc. A comparison with the text above will be sufficient to show that this is not what Dorner has said. In order to prevent misapprehension of his exact point Dorner took pains to use italics, and to emphasize the fact that he is here considering whether any *persons* will be finally condemned. Theological inferences from an author's words should not be regarded as necessarily his views. I may notice here, as another instance of the danger of interpreting a profound thinker by hasty inferences from particular sentences, the mistake into which the same critic falls in his conclusion that Dorner's view of forensic justification involves the absurdity of the actual forgiveness of the sins of the individual before they have been committed. The *Bibliotheca Sacra* owes it to its own former reputation for scholarship, as well as in justice to Dorner, to retract the misapprehensions of this article, and to publish a worthy review of Dorner's system.—TR.]

rests on *preponderant* exegetical grounds (but that gives no dogmatic proposition, because this must be derived also from the principle of faith),¹ nor have

[¹ Dorner's meaning in this condensed sentence is liable to misapprehension and abuse. The remarks already made in the Introduction concerning his view of the relation of Scripture and faith, may serve to indicate in general how this sentence should be read. I may make his idea clearer by asking what, upon Dorner's principles, is necessary to a dogma of faith? (1) It must of course have foundations in the Scriptures, but more than this is necessary before what seem to be the contents of a Scripture can be made an article of faith. (2) A dogma should be consistent with the whole contents of Scripture as apprehended by Christian faith. (3) A dogma of faith will show itself to be necessary to faith, or in some way, immediately, or indirectly, it will verify itself in the experience of faith. If it cannot be thus appropriated by faith, it may lie as an element in the Scripture which we cannot as yet make our own, and put forth as a part of our faith. The balance of exegetical reasons may seem to favor it, but we cannot assert it with dogmatic confidence until we are able to assimilate it in the life of faith, and to harmonize it with the general contents of Christianity. So some may hold that the preponderance of exegetical considerations teaches that, according to St. Peter, Christ preached the Gospel among the dead; but they may hesitate to put the natural inference from that Scripture forward as a dogmatical sentence, because they may not be able to bring the idea of a continued future probation for any man into the general harmony of their faith. They may prefer to leave the texts from Peter as they stand, regarding them as biblical elements to which our theology is not as yet equal. So Dorner, with his usual exegetical candor, admits a balance of exegetical considerations for a statement which he is not able to derive also from the principle of faith, and in particular to harmonize with his conception of freedom.—Tr.]

the dogmatical grounds of apokatastasis proved decisive. Hence that, too, cannot be taught dogmatically. The objective reason why dogmatically no positive categorical statement can here be made, lies in human *freedom*. This does not allow the assertion of a universal process *necessarily* leading to salvation, because such a process is and remains conditioned by non-rejection and free acceptance.

But this same human freedom, so long as it lasts, also excludes any categorical dogmatical affirmation that there certainly are damned beings; for so long as freedom of any kind exists, so long the possibility of conversion is not excluded, though it be through judgment and damnation to deep, long woe. And wherever this possibility issued in reality, there self-evidently damnation could not continue. The necessary eternal duration of the rejection and damnation of the one class could be maintained, with complete definiteness, only provided we also taught, as advocates of eternal damnation generally do teach, the total loss of freedom for conversion — absolute hardening; whereupon the new question arises whether such are still men, and not rather beings that were men, but have really fallen back to a lower plane.¹

[¹ The question might fairly be raised here whether Dorner, in consistency with his own view of the definite decision which Christianity shall sooner or later bring to all, might not reach a more pronounced dogmatic conclusion at this point. I presume

6. But a third theory seems now to meet increasing approval, in opposition both to the church doctrine, and especially to the doctrine of apokatastasis, viz.: the hypothesis of the annihilation of the wicked, which likewise thinks it can attain categorical state-

his position would be this: So far as the Christian idea of God requires divine forbearance, and so far as the gracious possibilities of the impenitent are concerned, the last judgment is, and ethically should be, final; but so long as the metaphysical nature of freedom remains, so long the possibility of a different choice must be assumed. The metaphysical possibility of repentance and faith is involved in the continuance of the metaphysical freedom of the will. Either, then, if we would arrive here at dogmatic certainty, we must suppose that the loss of real, or moral, freedom through persistent sin finally ruins also the metaphysical freedom of the will, reducing what was a moral personality to the level of a thing; or, renouncing dogmatic certainty upon this point, we must admit the metaphysical possibility of repentance as involved in freedom, and not destroyed even under the judgment of God.

But if this abstract, metaphysical possibility of repentance in eternity should ever become an actuality, then new questions would arise, viz., whether punishment would not then become chastisement, since the ethical unchangeableness of God would require of Him changed relations to changed conditions of his creatures; and, further, whether penitence under punishment would render morally possible again the human capacity for redemption. But these are questions beyond questions, and our speculation here may easily carry thought beyond all sober limits. It is sometimes, however, a relief to faith, to be allowed to ask questions, and to follow them out until we realize the mystery of eternity in which the ends of the creation are lost from thought.

—TR.]

ments respecting the question of persons. We accordingly dwell on it awhile.

If regard for the fact of freedom does not permit the affirmation of the doctrine that a harmonious conclusion of history and universal restoration are secured by means of a conversion certainly universal and without exception,—for if the ethical process turned into a physical one, the result attained would be only apparently of ethical value,—this harmonious conclusion might seem to be better secured by the view that, since the power of immortal life resides only in Christ and living communion with him, those who obstinately and finally withdraw from such communion perish and are annihilated. This theory may take account of human freedom and the divine justice further by leaving room for a punishment of the wicked, and making the very annihilation itself to be effected by the consuming divine penalties, which begin from the final judgment.¹ In favor of the view of the final annihilation of the wicked, it is alleged² that numerous expressions which are used in refer-

¹ The latter is taught by the Socinians and Rothe, whereas according to Weiss (Stud. u. Krit., 1835: Ueber die philos. Bedeutung der chr. Eschatologie; Philos. Dogmatik, sec. 965) annihilation comes of itself upon all who are not rendered immortal by regeneration. White, on the other hand, makes a retributive punishment and pain fall, indeed, on the godless before their annihilation, but seems to regard this as the act of God himself. P. 499 ff.

² *E.g.*, by White, p. 359 ff.

ence to those falling under sentence of condemnation suggest annihilation.¹ The word death has, indeed, various meanings, but it always denotes the dissolution of a living power. Thus physical death, so called, is a dissolution of the living unity, which embraces the body and the soul. Further, the sinful state of the soul is called a spiritual death, because through it the bond between the soul and God is dissolved. When, then, a "second death" is spoken of, this may signify merely the dissolving of the soul itself into nothing.² This view can be readily reconciled with Scripture passages which teach an eternal duration of hell punishments, if *αἰώνιος* can denote an immeasurable, indefinitely long duration of punishment. Although the notion may have less to commend it, that God himself directly destroys the souls of the ungodly, we may still remember that to the ethical pertains also ontological significance;³ whence it follows that just as the appropriation of the Holy Spirit and of the divine life has importance in the elevation and strengthening of the entire human life, so, conversely, estrangement from God severs from the

¹ *E.g.*, ἀπώλεια, ἔλεθος, Matt. vii. 13; Rom. ix. 22; 1 Thess. v. 8; 2 Thess. i. 9; 1 Tim. vi. 9; ἀπολλόναι, ἀπόλλυσθαι, Matt. x. 28; Luke xvii. 33; John iii. 16, xii. 25; 1 Cor. i. 18.

² Comp. Nitzsch, p. 413 ff.

³ This sentence is characteristic of Dorner. To him the real is the ethical; the ontological is conceived by him always as supreme moral reality.—TR.

source of life, and the growing dominion of sin is no-wise without influence on the continuance of the spiritual forces. Rather sin, too, has ontological import, *i.e.*, negatively. This also seems to be held by all church teachers, who, in order to maintain the eternity of hell punishments, and cut off the continued possibility of conversion, assert as a natural consequence and punishment of sin the entire loss of freedom in the case of the lost; with which, in keeping with the connection of knowledge and will, is linked a complete darkening of the spirit, and extinction of every remnant of higher light and knowledge of God. And however it may be disputed whether so shattered a being, in whom that which makes a man man—reason and freedom—is extinguished, is still to be called a man, so much seems clear, that even the church teachers mentioned reach in the main point an annihilation of the ungodly. These are then to be viewed essentially as a kind of demented beings, perhaps raging for ever in impotent fury, which again would be a sort of annihilation of their human character.

It cannot, in fact, be denied that the two views—that of those church teachers who make freedom and reason, and especially God-consciousness to be extinguished for ever in the damned, and that of the advocates of the annihilation of the ungodly—approach very near to each other; only that the latter have this

in their favor, that they at least set aside the screaming dissonance that would be left, by reason of the unity of the world, if alongside the world of the perfected and saved that other world of insanity and blind enmity to God continued eternally. But it does not at once follow from this that we can set up the annihilation of the wicked as a dogmatic proposition, but only that, if we hold fast to the immortality of the wicked, we must not assume the effect of sin to be the entire extinction of freedom and reason. The doctrine of the annihilation of the ungodly is on its part likewise mere hypothesis, for to assert at present dogmatically that there are certainly those doomed to annihilation would be incompatible with freedom. But exegetically this hypothesis has against it the fact that Holy Scripture represents a deliverance from imprisonment as possible, although through heavy punishment.¹ It is again opposed in that whereas Holy Scripture teaches differences of degree in guilt and punishment even after the judgment, and therefore not an infinite guilt in all whom the judgment condemns; this hypothesis, on the contrary, assumes one and the same highest degree of punishment for all sinners, namely, annihilation (so far, namely, as the fact is left out of sight, that annihilation is also an end of all punish-

¹ Matt. v. 26. (Comp. xii. 31 ff., since punishment is not forgiveness.)

ment).¹ Although, further, this hypothesis seems exceedingly favorable to the unity and harmonious consummation of the world, there remains still the disturbing element, that such glorious spiritual capacities in the image of God, having an essential relation to infinite excellence, and thus themselves partaking, though in small degree, of the infinite, are supposed to perish, and be annihilated, after the manner of mere finite natural faculties.² Accordingly, this hypothesis also can lay no claim to unreserved acknowledgment and dogmatic authority, and we must be content with saying, that the ultimate fate of individuals remains veiled in mystery, as well as the question whether all will attain the blessed goal or not. Enough that we have the certainty of eternal life and of the consummation of God's kingdom, however this may be brought about. But though we lack a knowledge of much that is in itself worth knowing in eschatology generally, and especially un-

¹ With annihilation, indeed, all punishment is at an end. But if the ungodly are not annihilated by God, but consumed by the punishments, such a view does not exhibit a just distribution of the degrees of punishment; for the sin of the worst transgressors must do its consuming work most rapidly, and thus the punishment for them would be most quickly ended, whereas it would continue so much the longer, the less the power of evil in the sinner.

² Evil is never the substance of the soul; this remains metaphysically good.

der this head—knowledge which we cannot have on account of human freedom—it remains for us to lay down the following dogmatic propositions:

1. There is a judgment which maintains divine justice, but also, by excluding everything hostile, ministers to the consummation of the kingdom of God.

2. There is no predestination to damnation; only continued impenitence can be the cause of that; hence no one is forever damned who has and can have the will to be converted.

3. The process of grace can never become physical. Hence rejection of grace remains possible, and every hope of apokatastasis that passes into the physical sphere is to be rejected, as well as the hope of universal salvation apart from Christ.

4. Some may be eternally damned, so far as the abuse of freedom continues eternally; but without the possibility of the restoration of freedom, man has passed into another class of beings, and regarded from the standpoint of the idea of man, is a mere ruin.

5. Blessedness can exist only where holiness is. As there is no penitence damned,¹ so there is no unholy blessedness.

¹ Nitzsch: The thought of an eternal damnation and punishment is necessary, in so far as there can be no enforced holiness of a personal being to eternity, and no saved unholiness to eternity. System, ed. 6, sec. 219, p. 411.

THE CONSUMMATION OF THE WORLD AND ETERNAL BLESS-
EDNESS.

SEC. 155.

There is an eternal blessedness through the transfiguring consummation of nature, of individuals, and of the kingdom of God.

1. The New Testament proclaims, as did the Old,¹ a consummation (*συντέλεια*,² *ἀποκατάστασις*)³ when Christ shall have accomplished his mediatorial work and led all God's children to the Father, that God may be all in all, *i.e.*, that his glory may be revealed, and the dominion of his will be universal,—not merely the will of his love, but also of his power and justice. In detail we have to consider the Consummation of *Nature*, of *Individuals*, and of *the Kingdom of God*.

2. The Consummation of the natural world presupposes an end⁴ of the present world-period and system; which, however, must not be conceived as an annihilation of the world, although it is described as a combustion of the world.⁵ Matter is not evil; the destruction thus can only refer to the form of the

¹ Is. lxvi.

² Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 49; xxiv. 8; xxviii. 20.

³ Acts iii. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 24-28. Rev. xxi. 1.

⁴ 1 John ii. 17.

⁵ 2 Pet. iii. 7-10.

world.¹ The conflagration may precede as a means of transfiguring the world into heightened beauty, into a new heaven and new earth.² The substance of the world may be ennobled thereby. This transfiguring of nature includes not merely the erasing of all traces of sin in the form and substance of the world, but also so intimate a union of nature with spirit, that there will no longer be any place for decay.³ Without loss of substantiality, matter will have exchanged its darkness, hardness, heaviness, inertia, and impenetrableness, for clearness, radiance, elasticity, and transparency.⁴ Although with the consummation of the earthly creation its task will be discharged, yet from this consummated circle of creation as a basis, an altogether new stadium may again begin, an advance to new creations with the co-operation of perfected mankind, in which God will have his being, and through which He will continue his work.

3. As concerns the Consummation of *Individuals*,

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 31. See above, p. 61.

² Rev. xxi. 1. Ps. cii. 26. Isa. lxvi.

³ According to Rothe's Theol. Ethik, liability to decay is possible only through the dissolution of the ideal and real through the expiring of the former.

⁴ Rothe, Ethik, ed. 2, ii., 481 ff. Schöberlein, Jahrb. f. d. Theol., 1861, vi., 1; Ueber das Wesen der geistigen Natur und Leiblichkeit. Hamberger, Die himmlische Leiblichkeit, ibid., 1862, 1. Lange, *ut supra*.

the promise is that the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of the Father.¹ As our earthly body bore the image of the earthly Adam, so our pneumatic, spiritual body shall bear Christ's image.² We shall stand in a state of unfettered life. The somatico-psychical organism will be the absolutely adequate means for the activity of the spirit, all mortality and passivity of the body will have vanished. Space and time, if also life shall still run in these forms, will no longer be restraining limits. The perfected, through the eternal life in them, have, like God, a fount of life within themselves.³ "Connection with all world-spheres, and especially the persons in them, hence also communion with these, is open to the perfected. A light will stream from out the inmost being of the perfected, forming an atmosphere about them and binding them together." When we are entirely sanctified in body, soul, and spirit, even the earthly distinctions of sex will no longer exist, nor the earthly distinction of ages, each of which has its imperfection; rather the power of eternal life includes both perpetual youth and the ripeness of maturity. The new spiritual body also is raised into the fulness of spiritual energy. It will share in the freedom from space, and be able to follow the

¹ Matt. xiii. 43.

² 1 Cor. xv. 49. Comp. 1 John iii. 2. Phil. iii. 21. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

³ John iv. 14.

swiftness of thought. And since it will no longer form an independent life-centre apart from the spirit and the sphere of its energy, but the perfected spirit will rather have become the only and all-controlling centre of the person, as a result, the spirit's liability to be tempted through the body will disappear with the mortality and passiveness of the latter. The spiritual side, on its part, will be remote from the possibility of sin, not through loss of freedom, but through the indestructible love-energy springing from union with God, from the presence of God and Christ, and from the constant joy in and with them. Likewise the perfected spirit will, like God and Christ, possess true freedom in that it can no more become unfree. On the side of knowledge and will, the soul will enjoy blessed contentment. Then Christ will keep the Supper anew with us, and the hours of highest solemnity in this life are but a weak foretaste of the powers of the world to come.¹ Then fragmentary knowledge will cease, for we shall see face to face.²

To those who love Him, God will give what no eye hath seen or ear heard, nor heart conceived.³ The pure in heart shall see God,⁴ *i.e.*, not only possess him by faith, or have knowledge through inferences from his works, but they shall know Him as He is. They

¹ Heb. vi. 4, 5.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 10-12. 1 John iii. 2. John xvii. 24. Rev. xxii. 4.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

⁴ Matt v. 8.

will have power to love Him perfectly, for his loveliness and beauty, as Baxter says, shall be rightly known only when "the heavenly faculty of perception is winged, sharpened, the highest clearness of vision." (Lange). Since the spiritual body has then become a perfect organ even of knowledge, so will God in his cosmical being, and the world as it is filled with God, be beheld by the blessed, and apprehended in their immediate presentness. The individual will be known in the light of great visions of the whole, and in the reciprocal connection between him and the whole. So far as the universe is eternally progressing, and new cycles of creation are ever coming into being, knowledge is never final, and yet never fragmentary; but it can survey the whole as it exists from time to time, and the new treasures of divine wisdom and love poured into it. But this whole is itself like a circle ever widening, yet always a whole, a harmonious organism. The beatified mutually understand each other also. There will not only be a reunion and mutual recognition,¹ but we shall also behold (in which even a Socrates rejoiced) all the great minds in the history of humanity, a Paul, John, the Prophets, and have the noblest enjoyment in infinitely manifold communion and love. But the centre of the blessed enjoyment

¹ Matt. viii. 11; xvii. 3. Luke xiii. 28.

will be God himself and Christ. The highest activity of the will is to be in perfected worship,¹ consisting in adoration, thanks, and praise, and also in joyous obedience, making itself in godlike love an organ for God's continuous work. This leads to the relation of blessedness to *rest* and *enjoyment* on the one hand, on the other to *action*. The poetic figures which depict the enjoyment of the heavenly harmony are especially borrowed from the domain of art. Art, the Beautiful, receives here at last its special place, for it is the way of art to delight in visible presentation (*Darstellung*), to achieve the classical and perfect with unfettered play of its powers.² Every one, morally perfect, will thus wed the good to the beautiful. It follows then from this, that in the rest, which is conceived of as the goal, as an eternal Sabbath,³ there will be no inactivity; and also no unrest in the activity. Labor and effort have fallen away, because the organ serves the spirit with perfect willingness; but godlike work continues.⁴ Nothing remains indeed to be done with reference to personal sin, but for this reason outward activity still continues; nay, even production and the contemplating of what is produced, both with undisturbed sense of blessedness. The talents of individuals will not be lost, nay, will

¹ Rev. vii. 12; xxii. 3.

² Rev. v. 8-14; xxi.

³ Heb. iv. 11. Rev. vii. 16, 17; xxi. 4.

⁴ Schleiermacher, *Christ. Glaube*, ii., 500.

be raised to higher potency, and spring without hindrance from out the fount of eternal life.¹ The fact of activity in blessedness is emphasized in the figure of the faithful being set over many things, the commission to rule cities, and the sitting and judging, *i.e.*, ruling the tribes of Israel.² Further, the creations of God will still advance, and since, according to the analogy of the relation of angels to the growth of God's kingdom upon earth, the law prevails that the perfected at the time forms the fixed starting-point for further productions, the blessed will never be in want of an arena of satisfying activity. Since nature has acquired perfect plasticity for the spirit, it will be no longer a mere place or abode of the spirit, but its property, nay, enabled to become the pure mirror of the spirit, and the willing adequate organ for its creations and outward manifestations. If inquiry is made as to the contents of this working and representation, they are the exhaustless contents of eternal life streaming into every individual life, the Triune God himself. The Deity, infinitely rich and glorious, is apprehended and reflected back by each individuality in its own way—a thought expressed in the gleaming jewels of many colors in the city of God.³ Every individuality, therefore, reflects the divine in a way

¹ Luke xix. 13.

² Luke xix. 13-17. Matt. xxv. 15 ff.; xix. 28.

³ Rev. xxi. 11-23.

no other can do, but is also receptive to each of the rest, and their reflecting. Thus, each in loving contemplation moulds into its own being the others and their reflectings in the past and present, and the saying becomes truth, "All is yours."

There is place for difference of degree in reference to blessedness and glory, but without envy and disorder; for every one has the measure which he is able to receive, and every one in his own way, through the absolute communion of love which binds together the perfected, shares in that which is another's. This enhances the sense of life and the power of individuality. But all, the entire, organized circle of countless blessed spirits grow, without any defect in blessedness pertaining to their growth, for the source of their life is the unsullied, faultless blessedness, nay, the eternal life which God himself is—God the Triune—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

4. But the city of God in the glorified, transfigured universe, the temple which is the medium of God's presence to all, is the CHURCH OF GOD. If the universe has become the holy place, it does not lack its Holy of Holies. The idea of the Church is certainly narrower than that of the kingdom of God; its consummation alone would not be the consummation of the latter. But the Church is not merely humanity united with God; it embraces also the higher spirit-world which has the same Head—Christ. Again, the

Church is the animating, hallowing, glorifying centre of all moral communions, which embrace also nature in its kind, and which on earth found but imperfect, typical manifestations of their reality or idea. The valuable, true elements of all communions are not only preserved, but brought to consummation in harmonious interpenetration, without losing their distinctions. Thus is the manifold wisdom of God,¹ the wealth of God's creative thoughts, revealed through the Church of God and to it, for the Church is to all the innermost power of consummation, because in it is the throne of the eternal Life. The deepest ground thereof lies in the incarnation or Godmanhood of Christ, which took place primarily for the Church; for in his incarnation not only are God and man united, but in his resurrection the beginning of the consummation of nature is typified. The power of his resurrection continues in the consummated new creation of his Church, and effects also the transfiguring of the world.* As in this consummation all false blending of evil and good, of mortal and eternal, must come to a separation, so also the separateness of spirit and nature, which is the cause of mortality and temptation, of vacillation and inconstancy, must yield to the power which proceeds from the risen Christ, in whom spirit and nature are absolutely blended. This

¹ Eph. iii. 10.

* Phil. iii. 10.

is the representation of Paul.¹ As a unit the Church is called the Bride of Christ,² but it is a unity in variety and multitude; it is the City of God, the new Jerusalem.³ God himself is its light and sun and everlasting day; but the divine light is also reflected in manifold ways from the well-ordered, firm, and glorious structure of the City. The beatified throng of the righteous, praising God and perfected, are indissolubly united through the Holy Spirit with the bridegroom,⁴ as also with one another through love and mutual helpfulness. After the conflicts and tribulations, especially those of the last age before Christ's second advent, will come the marriage-feast of the Lamb, and the bridegroom will bring home the bride to the new Supper,⁵ to the blessed and indissoluble union of the members with their Head by which the dearest and holiest relations of earthly communion all attain to their truth.

¹ Rom. viii. 11-19. Col. i. 18 ff. Eph. i. 10.

² Rev. xxii. 17. Comp. Matt. ix. 15; xxv. 1. Luke v. 34. Mark ii. 19. Eph. v. 24-32.

³ Heb. xii. 22. Rev. iii. 12; xxi. 2, 10.

⁴ Rev. xxii. 17. Eph. iv. 13, 16.

⁵ Rev. xix. 7, 9. Matt. xxii. 2 ff.

APPENDIX.

THE EXALTATION OR POST-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST.

FIRST DOCTRINAL PART.

The Descent into Hades (Comp. Sec. 99).

SEC. 124.

THE so-called descent of Christ into Hades belongs neither to the state of humiliation or suffering, nor does it have a mere epideictic meaning; but it designates rather, for Christ's person, a higher state of life, of a pneumatic character, in which he can manifest his spiritual power independently of time and space.

It is to be accepted as a result of the more recent exegetical research¹ that, as was also the belief of the

¹ Weiss, *Petrinischer Lehrbegriff*, 1855. Guder, p. 88 ff. Frank, p. 205 ff., over 1 Pet. iii. 18; iv. 6. Acts ii. 24-27. Eph. iv. 8-10 does not belong here. [Huther, in Meyer's Commentary, in his note upon this passage, shows the grammatical untenableness of turning around the meaning of Christ's preaching into a preaching of Noah, in the spirit of Christ; an interpretation which, he says, is all the more capricious as Noah, notwithstanding 2 Pet. ii. 5, is not here spoken of at all as a preacher;

ancient church, Peter really thinks of Christ as active after his death, probably before his resurrection, in

and moreover, it confuses the two distinct biblical expressions, Christ's spirit as the essential nature of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ as the third person of the Trinity. From 1 Pet. iv. 6, he concludes "that it is said that to all who are dead (*i.e.*, at the time of the judgment)—entirely independent of when or how—the Gospel shall have been preached, be it before or after their death." Alford's note *in loco* agrees with the great consensus of interpreters in holding that the words mean an actual going of Christ into Hades and the preaching of his Gospel to the class mentioned in the text. The reason for mentioning that particular class he finds in the suggestion of the context; Huther (in Meyer), p. 198, finds the reason for it in the fact that Christ extended his saving activity to those who were already condemned in the first judgment which overtook all men, which is a type of the last judgment. Alford's words are in point here: "It is ours to deal with the plain words of Scripture, and to accept its revelations as far as vouchsafed to us. And they are vouchsafed to us to the utmost limit of legitimate inference from revealed facts. That inference every intelligent reader will draw from the fact here announced; it is not purgatory, it is not universal restitution; but it is one which throws blessed light upon one of the darkest enigmas of the divine justice; the cases where the final doom seems infinitely out of proportion to the lapse which has incurred it. And as we cannot say to what other cases this preaching may have applied, so it would be presumption in us to limit its occurrence or its efficacy. The reason of mentioning here these sinners above other sinners appears to be their connection with the type of baptism which follows. If so, who shall say that the blessed act was confined to them?" The attempt to evade the natural meaning of these passages in First Peter by remote inference from 2 Peter ii. 5, 9, hardly needs serious refutation.—TR.]

the kingdom of the dead (in Hades, old German *Hel*), and therefore not in the place of torment, but in the intermediate region.¹ If hell is the same as the region of the dead, the notion is precluded of Christ going into Hades in order to endure the torments of hell.² The reference, found among reformed theologians, of the descent into Hades to the torments of hell, which had to be endured, shows its intrinsic weakness in this, that nevertheless these inner sufferings were then usually connected with the cross.³ Since the text speaks of a preaching to the spirits reserved in Hades, the interpretation, here and there endorsed by Luther, that Christ presented himself as a victorious Lord to the devil and the damned in hell, thus making a mere epideictic triumphal progress there, is out of the question. Before Christ there was no abode peopled by the damned; the Old Testament *Sheol* is something different. A preferable meaning would be that Christ vanquished the devil

¹ Only v. Hoffman, v. Zezschwitz, and Luthardt try to avoid this natural interpretation, understanding by the preaching, 1 Pet. iii. 19, a preaching on earth to the spiritually dead, and that in the days of Noah (as formerly Aepin).

² Aepin supposed the descent into Hades to be a part of the redemptive suffering for humanity, but without including the torments of the damned; for Hades is simply the intermediate region, not Gehenna.

³ The Form. Conc., 785, declares against identifying the descent into Hades with the burial.

and hell. But since this conquest takes place, not through physical power and force, but through his entire redeeming work, it could only be ascribed to the descent into hell at the cost of the redemption accomplished by Christ. It is hence to be regarded as the application of the benefit of his atonement, as seems to be intimated by the *κηρύττειν* among the departed. But this relegates us to the prophetic office. The descent into Hades is therefore not to be regarded as primarily an act of the high-priestly or kingly office. The preaching of the grace of God in Christ, his presentation of himself "as the efficient principle of salvation, able to atone and actually atoning," pertains primarily to the prophetic office; but this, again, reveals his person in a new form.¹

2. The descent into Hades cannot be derived simply from Christ's having the same nature with us,

¹ Frank (Theol. d. Conc. For., p. 429) explains that the F. C. does not definitely assign the descent into Hades to the state of exaltation; for it speaks indeed of the vanquishing of hell and the devil, but this could also be on the supposition of the descent into Hades involving suffering, as indeed was held by M. Flacius and Joach. Westphalius, as well as by Aepin. Frank himself (Syst. d. chr. Wahr., p. 205 ff.) rightly excludes all suffering in reference to Christ after his death (in keeping with Luke xxiii. 43), but calls it "foolish," as nevertheless the ancient church held, to suppose that the preaching of Christ (the *κηρύττειν*) in the under-world included the intention of redeeming those *πνεύματα*, and the eventual realization of that intention, p. 207.

as if it were a personal necessity for him, because all men pass into Hades after the separation of the soul from the body. Acts ii. 24 does not affirm this, but rather that his person could not be held by Hades. It can only be conceded that Christ was unable to avoid Hades, if by Hades is understood the state of separation between body and soul, instead of a place in which departed spirits are gathered, because that state of separation was involved in Christ's death; but the doctrine of Christ's descent into Hades would then be no new doctrinal point, but only a proof that his death actually took place. On the other hand, Christ's going to the spirits in prison is spoken of as a spontaneous act, not as an act of physical necessity. No weakness in his person, no power of Hades over him, led him into Hades. In death his person is inwardly perfected (sec. 123). Not a shadowy life does he live in Hades; but, according to Peter, he intervenes mightily by his word, and carries on his work; as, therefore, his very deliverance from the limits of the mortal body is already an indication of a higher stage of existence.¹

3. Dogmatic sobriety enjoins reserve upon this point. Christ's death was no illusive death. The separation of the soul and the body, affirmed in this article, implies a confirmation not only of the reality

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 18.

of his death, but also of the reality of his human soul, with which the *Unio* of the Logos continued. We must, therefore, think of his soul as bodiless for a time—at least as without the material, earthly body. He was then Pneuma only. And this is the dogmatic substratum for the position that Christ could appear and work in the region of those who as departed spirits lead a similar bodiless existence.

We have here, then, a requirement—unless Christ is to be conceived as in a condition of spiritual slumber, or inaction in this bodiless state—to imagine him as at work during this time in a way appropriate to this stadium. Yet no more detailed construction of the necessity and mode of this activity on behalf of the departed is to be attempted; but the New Testament passages must be left in their simple form. Nevertheless, the following elements contained in the descent into Hades are important. There was truth in the notion of the Hebrews respecting Sheol; yet the world of the intermediate state—not merely the notion of it—has a history. Even the pious in the Old Testament tremble at the kingdom of the dead, just as in the Middle Ages, also, humanity fell back into a pre-Christian dread of death. For purgatory, again, is a Hades which even Christians did not overcome, more terrible than Sheol; and its gloomy effects overspread, like a dark

shadow, the whole of this present life. Now, through Christ, the intermediate state of the departed has experienced a movement, nay, a transformation, through the manifestation of his person and work. The ceasing of this preaching, (*κήρυγμα*), which Christ began with his preaching at that time, is neither recorded nor reasonably to be supposed; as indeed the ancient church supposed that the preaching on behalf of the departed was continued by the apostles. The apostles knew that with the completion of the atonement deliverance is given from the terrors of Hades, and the fear of death;¹ and the same consciousness found expression again, in the strongest way, at the reformation. No power, not even death and Hades, can separate us from fellowship with Christ. But this further implies that Christ's appearance among the dwellers in the region of the dead was the work of his free spirit-power—no passive subjection to a mere physical necessity, and this leads to the further consequence, that the descent into Hades expresses the universality of Christ's significance, also for former generations and for the entire kingdom of the dead. The distinction between earlier and later generations, between the time of ignorance and the time of knowledge of him-

¹ Heb. ii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 55. Rom. viii. 38, 39. Phil. i. 20-23.

self, is done away by Christ.¹ No physical power is a limit to him. The future world, like the present, is the scene of his activity. Combining these farthest extremes in his person, he constitutes himself the centre transcending all physical limits, "in presence of which all distinctions of time and space vanish, one distinction alone having significance—that between faith and unbelief."²

Observation 1.—Christ's saying, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43), agrees with the descent into Hades so far as by paradise the assured state of blessedness is meant; for even in his work in Hades, Christ is in blessedness, and blessedness is in communion with him.

Observation 2.—The period of Rationalism, however great the interest it showed for the salvation of the heathen, illogically took special offence at the present point of doctrine. Strauss, on the contrary, thinks ("Dogm.," i., 264, 271; ii., 148) that the

¹ Comp. Martensen, *ut supra*. But this is first accomplished by a historic influence proceeding from Christ, which sets aside the common opinion that, *e.g.*, the pious in the Old Testament, before Christ, possessed essentially the same faith in all respects, and the same blessing by retrospective action, as Christians. Such retrospective force is rendered superfluous and more than doubtful by the preaching of the Gospel in Hades. According to the Shepherd of Hermas (iii. 9, 16), it was necessary even for the patriarchs, and, according to Clement v. Alex. (Stromata, ii., 9, vi.), referred even to heathen philosophers. Comp. Guder, p. 127 ff.

² Comp. Martensen.

fact of vast masses of men, before and after Christ, dying without being brought into relation to Christ, proves that the Christian revelation is not necessary to salvation, because not universal. Modern theology has eagerly welcomed this article, and that because it removes both the difficulties mentioned; for it witnesses that even those who were not laid hold of by Christ's historic manifestation in their earthly life, still must and may be brought into relation to him, in order to be able to accept or to reject him. And thus the *universal* relation of Christianity to humanity, and the *absoluteness* of the Christian religion are confirmed.



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